

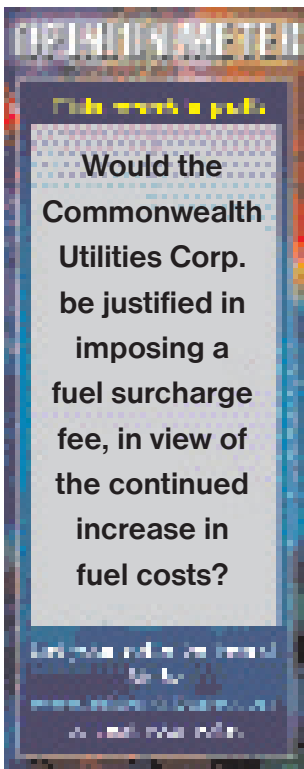
Saipan Tribune

CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

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Higher fuel surcharge in '05

Surcharge to climb from 3.5 cents to 5.5 in January

By AGNES E. DONATO
REPORTER

The Commonwealth Utilities Corp. admitted on Wednesday that the proposed 3.5-cent fuel surcharge, if adopted in December, could be at least 5.5 cents per kilowatt-hour by January 2005.

During Wednesday night's sparsely attended public hearing at the Multi-Purpose Center, acting CUC comptroller Ed Williams said all electric customers will be charged an additional 3.5 cents per kwh in December.

In calendar year 2005, customers that consume less than 2,001 kwh per month could be charged up to an addi-

tional 2 cents per kwh or a total of 5.5 cents per kwh.

For larger users, the additional charge that could be imposed is unlimited, depending on how much fuel prices increase.

Williams said he does not foresee the price of crude oil and of the resulting diesel oil, which CUC uses for its power

plants, going down. Therefore, the minimum 2-cent additional charge by January is almost definite.

One of the CUC customers present at the public hearing accused CUC of misleading the public. He pointed that contrary to what CUC has been telling the people, the proposed 3.5-cent fuel

See HIGHER on Page 14

Yasser Arafat dies at 75

RAMALLAH, West Bank (AP)—Yasser Arafat, the guerrilla leader turned Nobel Peace Prize winner who forced his people's plight into the world spotlight, died Thursday at age 75—still reviled by many as a terrorist.

Arafat died at 3:30 a.m. in a French military hospital. His last days were as murky and dramatic as his life. Arafat was flown to France on Oct. 29 after nearly three years of being penned in his West Bank headquarters by Israeli tanks.

He initially improved but then sharply deteriorated as rumors swirled about his illness. Neither doctors nor Palestinian leaders would say what killed Arafat.

Tens of thousands of Palestinians poured into the streets of the Gaza Strip in a spontaneous show of grief. Dozens of gunmen fired into the air, and marchers waved Palestinian flags.

Mosques blared Quranic verses and children burned tires on the main streets, covering the skies in black smoke. People pasted posters of Arafat on building walls.

Within hours, former Prime Minister Mahmoud Abbas was chosen to succeed Arafat as leader of the Palestine Liberation Organization. Prime Minister Ahmed Qureia was expected remain in charge of day-to-day governing.



UP IN SMOKE

This portion, and others, of the Advance Textile garment factory on Navy Hill was destroyed after a fire early yesterday morning. As of press time, the cause of the fire has yet to be determined. (See story on page 5)

SHAN SEMAN

Chinese, Filipinos top Karidat recipients

By LIBERTY DONES
REPORTER

Karidat listed Chinese and Filipinos as the top groups getting more food assistance in the last 10 months.

A Karidat Family Services Report from

November 2003 to August 2004 showed 598 food recipients; of these, 119 were Chinese while 114 were Filipinos.

Others include Chuukese, with 96 people getting assistance; Chamorros, 87; Carolinians, 72; other nationalities, 66; and Palauans, 66.

From January 2004 to March 2004, Karidat said some clients returned for additional food assistance: 40 Chinese, seven other nationalities, three Chuukese, two Palauans, and one Carolinian.

Most of the nonresident recipients are

See CHINESE on Page 14

Time runs out for the CNMI's delegate bill

By LIBERTY DONES
REPORTER

The CNMI delegate bill may no longer pass the U.S. Congress within the year, but the possibility of its passage remains "very, very good" when the next Con-

gress opens next year, Washington Rep. Pete A. Tenorio said.

Tenorio said in an interview yesterday that while the U.S. House of Representatives may still approve it during a lame-duck session, the U.S. Senate has no more time to tackle it.

"It has a chance of passing the House during the lame-duck Congress but it may not make it to the Senate, but the momentum of the passage in Congress is very, very good and I expect it will be passed next year without a problem at

See TIME on Page 14

What now on the Verizon sale?

By JOHN RAVELO
REPORTER



More than a year and two months after Verizon owner Micronesia Telecommunications Corp. and prospective purchaser Pacific Telecom Inc. jointly filed with the Commonwealth Telecommunications Commission an application for the transfer of all common stock, the proposed multi-

See WHAT on Page 12

Local

DIABETES
+GREEN

SAM
ELECTRONICS

‘Study at UOG without leaving Saipan’

By **AGNES E. DONATO**
REPORTER

Local students may soon pursue a baccalaureate degree from the University of Guam without leaving Saipan, as the Northern Marianas College continues to strengthen its ties with the only university in the Micronesian region.

NMC president Tony Deleon Guerrero said on Wednesday that a program coordinator is now being sought to oversee the University Center, which the college and UOG are planning to establish at NMC’s As Terlaje campus.

At the University Center, local students would be able to pursue postsecondary education beyond the associate degree programs currently provided by the NMC.

Deleon Guerrero said UOG would pay for the salary of the staff, while NMC would provide the students. No new instructors would be hired for the new program, as UOG would

provide the faculty, the college president added.

“Basically, the University Center will make higher courses more accessible to CNMI students, especially those who cannot afford to go to Hawaii or the U.S. mainland to pursue higher education. Whatever we offer through the University Center, students can also take without having to apply with UOG,” Deleon Guerrero said. “If the demand is, for example, a baccalaureate program in criminal justice, I will discuss it with [UOG president Harold] Allen and he will send a criminal justice professor to teach it under the University Center.”

The University Center arose from an agreement signed by Allen and Deleon Guerrero last September, which states that as an initial step, both institutions should “collaborate to conduct a market needs assessment and to identify where both can jointly leverage a competitive presence by

creating niche programming.”

“This programming may include professional [English as a Second Language] programming, pre-licensure programming, certificates, edu-tourism programs, and ultimately—with academic support from the institutions and appropriate support from [the Western Association of Schools and Colleges]—degree completion and dual admission in various undergraduate programs,” a portion of the agreement reads.

Deleon Guerrero said UOG and NMC are looking at having a baccalaureate degree program in military science offered at the University Center by spring 2005.

He noted that a lot of CNMI high school students in the CNMI are interested in careers in the military. For its part, Guam has been designated as the center of military activities in the region.

Further, Deleon Guerrero said, UOG is hoping to en-

hance its presence in Micronesia and to reach more Asian students through NMC.

Unlike Guam, which is subject to U.S. immigration laws, CNMI has control over its immigration system and is therefore more accessible to international students.

“We are exploring the possibility of having students learn English and obtain their associate degree at NMC and then transfer to UOG for the bachelor’s degree,” Deleon Guerrero said.

‘Rifu Apparel is not under investigation’

Garment firm Rifu Apparel has clarified that it is not under any investigation by U.S. Department of Labor Wage and Hour Division, contrary to the impression conveyed in a recent press release issued by the division’s San Francisco office.

In that press release, which was carried by the local media, the division detailed its success in collecting \$10 million in civil penalties during fiscal year 2003. Rifu Apparel was mentioned in the article as one company that was assessed penalties.

Rifu Apparel said in a statement, though, that a call to a division spokesman “revealed the facts behind the incident.”

“Payroll period in question was Feb. 9, 2004 to Feb. 22, 2004. The company routinely processes its payroll checks for payment one week after pay period ends. Payroll checks were to be released on Feb. 27, 2004. CNMI labor law allows that a companies pay employees two weeks after the end of the payroll period but Rifu’s payment policy is to make wage pay-

ments after one week. During the first three quarters of 2004, Rifu paid \$9.4 million in wages to employees on time as scheduled,” said the company.

On March 3, 2004, a U.S. Department of Labor investigator reportedly arrived at the Rifu factory unannounced for a review payroll and asked to inspect the Feb. 27, 2004 payroll. During this visit, Rifu Apparel said the investigator requested additional information that was to be provided by company on his return visit of March 8, 2004.

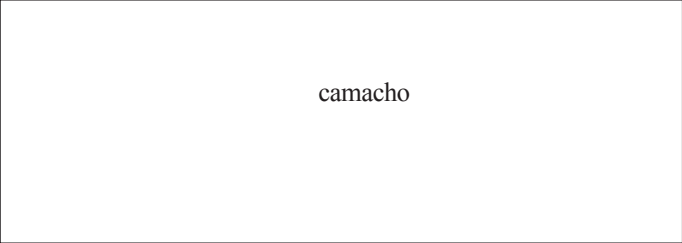
Rifu delayed release of payroll checks scheduled for Feb. 27, 2004 on March 5, 2004.

“Funds from buyer were wired from Korea one day later than expected. Because of the weekend, the receiving bank did not credit the local bank dispensing payroll checks until the beginning of the following week. Rifu Apparel does not release checks until funds are received,” it said.

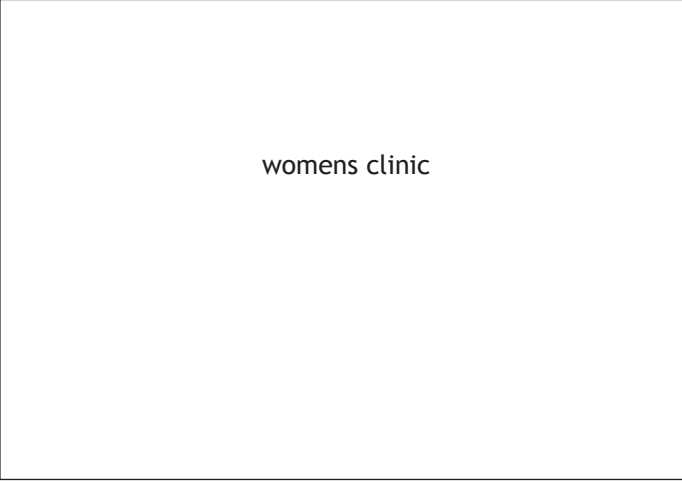
Rifu Apparel insisted that it did not break any CNMI laws and paid its workers their full

wages within the two-week period allowed.

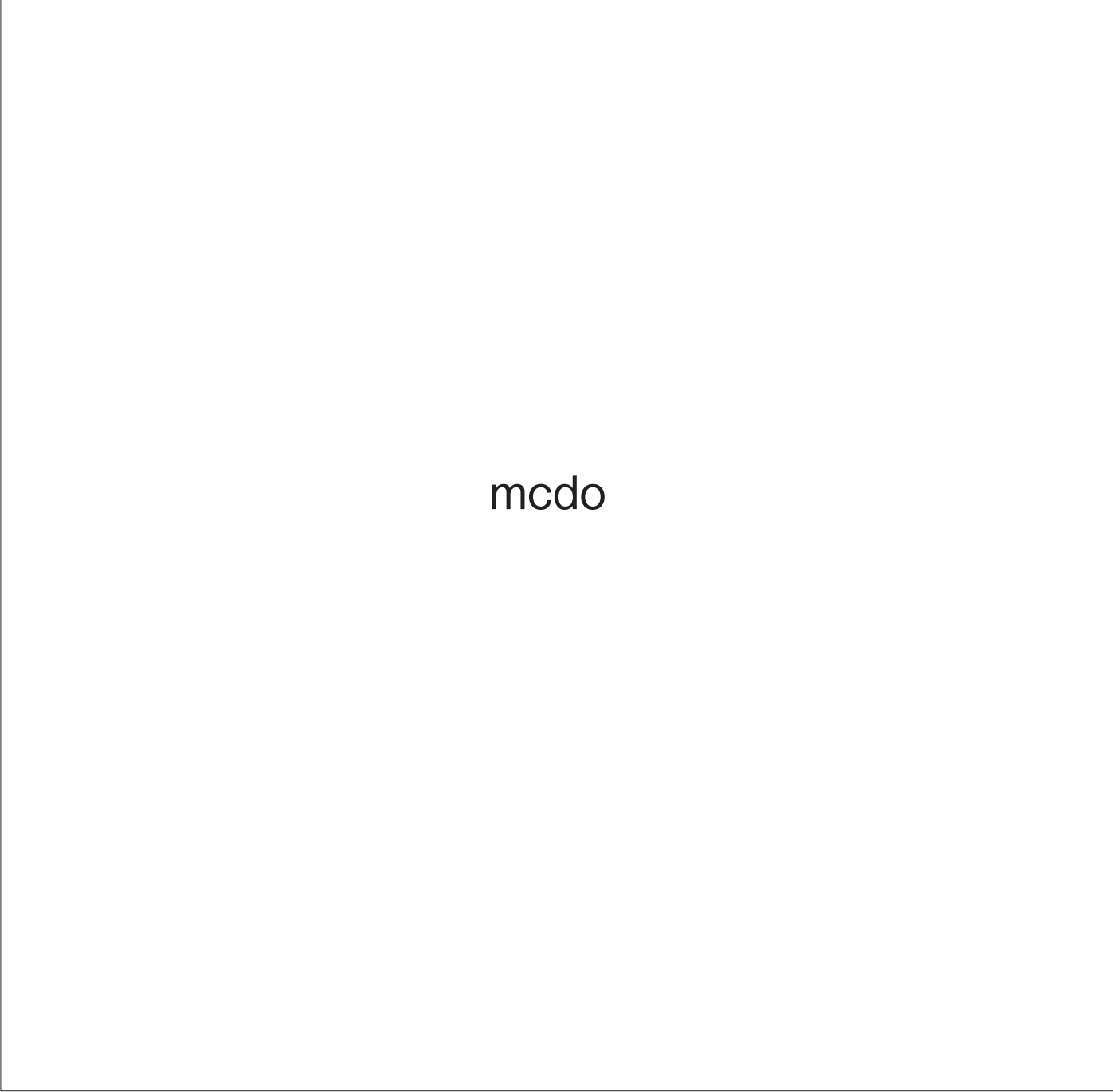
“The company was not under any investigation. The company stills maintains a policy of paying workers seven days after payroll periods ends. The intent of the news releases by the Department of U.S. Labor did not fully cover all the facts and could lead to wrong conclusions,” the company said.



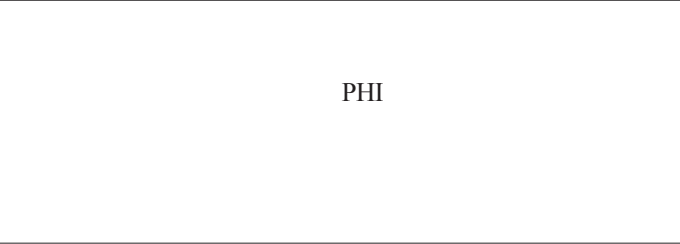
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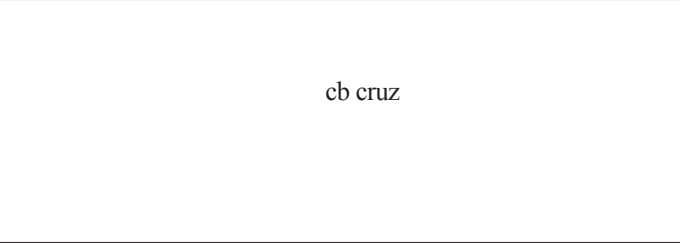
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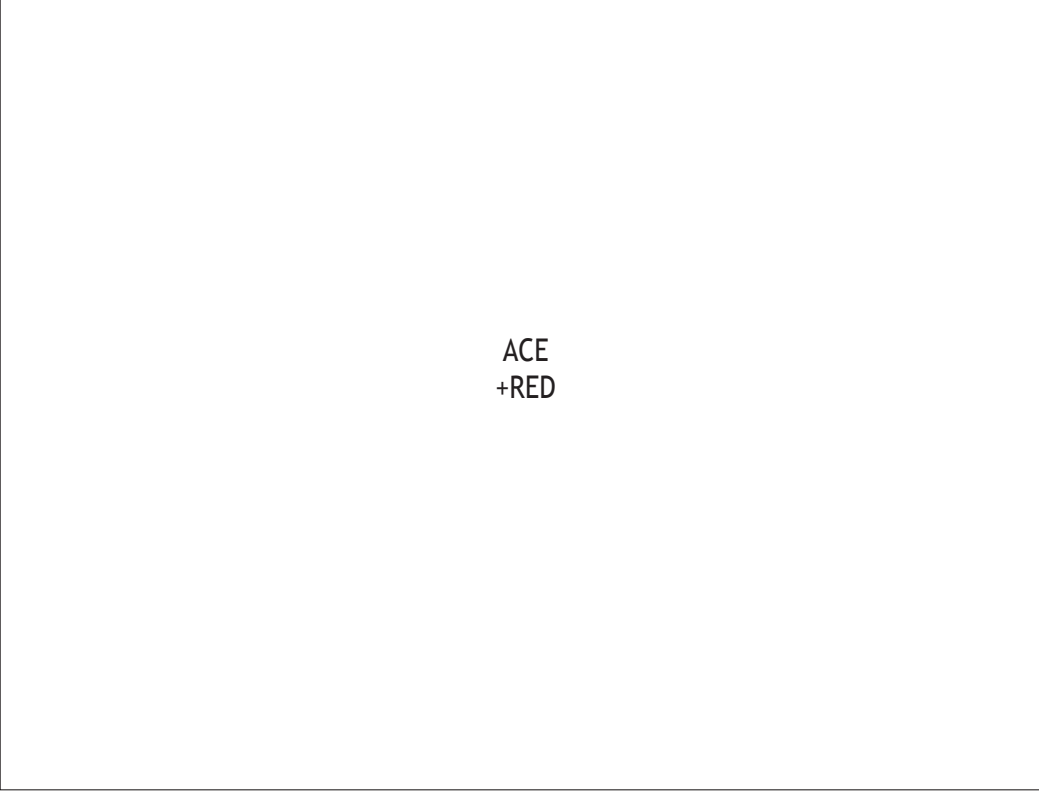
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PHI



cb cruz



ACE
+RED

'Remember, reflect, and be grateful'

By SHAN SEMAN
REPORTER

"What we have here today as part of American society, we can never take for granted."

These were the words of Capt. Stephen Maynard, commanding officer of the USS Blue Ridge, who served as keynote speaker in yesterday's Veterans' Day ceremony at the American Memorial Park.

"There are people out there that want to take away our liberties, to infringe upon our right to have personal freedoms, and we have to be strong as a military so that we can stand up to them," Maynard said during an interview. "Those [who] have already done so deserve a special place of remembrance in our hearts for all the good that they've done for the common good."

"I think that's what we have to remember here. Its not just a holiday where we get a day off from work. It's a day we should reflect on and remember what people have done for us," he added.

Everyone in attendance expressed similar views, spending over an hour to witness the speeches and activities dedicated to those who fought and are still fighting for the American way of life.

With the U.S. and CNMI flags waving in the air in the background, officials followed one other in extending personal messages of appreciation to all veterans and current members of the U.S. Armed Forces.

"Veterans' Day is a day of peace...peace made possible through the valiant and courageous efforts of our American patriots," said Washington Rep. Pedro A. Tenorio. "On this important day, we honor our American veterans everywhere, not only for leaving family and love ones at home to fight in a constant stream of conflicts around the world, but also for serving our nation in the highest station available to any citizen—as protectors of our ideals,



SHAN SEMAN

Members of the VFW Post 3457 pose for a photo shortly after dedicating a wreath to all veterans and individuals currently serving in the U.S. Armed Forces during yesterday's Veterans Day ceremony at the American Memorial Park.

values, hopes and dreams."

The ceremony also featured the laying of wreaths by officials, including Gov. Juan N. Babauta, Tenorio, Maynard, Saipan Mayor Juan B. Tudela, the VFW Post 3457, CNMI Veterans Association, U.S. Armed Forces Association, as well as AMP ranger Chuck Sayon and Military Affairs Office deputy special assistant Ruth Coleman.

"Freedom does not come cheaply! It is purchased at a very high cost," Coleman said during her appreciation remarks. "These are the man and women who, when they were called, answered with enthusiasm, and like their brothers and sisters, did not ask if it was going to be easy. They came, they sacrificed, they gave of themselves in the belief that they were defending liberty; a liberty which if they did not live to see, would stand as a shining beacon for the children who come after them. This is what the terrorists who attack our freedom do not, and will never understand."

Also included in the ceremony was the recognition of local Marine Scouts who served during World War II. They were presented with coins and certificates by Gov. Babauta and Washington Rep. Tenorio.

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LOTTERY

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CARRIER

Chuuk wants to learn CNMI procurement practices, regs

By LIBERTY DONES
REPORTER

Even as the CNMI procurement policies get flak from contractors and potential investors, the State of Chuuk has expressed its desire to learn more about the Commonwealth’s procurement procedures.

In an Oct. 19, 2004 letter to Gov. Juan N. Babauta, Chuuk Gov. Ansito Walter requested the Babauta administration “to work and share with my staff any procedures that your government may have already established relative to government procurement applicable to U.S. federal grant.”

Walter said that Chuuk is a sub-grantee of several federal grants under the arrangement of the amended Compact between the Federated States of Micronesia and the United States.

Under this arrangement, he said, Chuuk is required to set up procurement regulations, among other requirements, prior to accessing the grants.

“We have been advised that your government has already put in place such procurement rules acceptable to the U.S.,” he said.

In his response, Babauta informed the Chuuk governor that he has authorized the Department of Finance and the Attorney General’s Office to share information about CNMI procurement practices with Chuuk.

“I agree with you on the importance of maintaining and strengthening the relationships of mutual assistance that exist among all of the Micronesian islands,” Babauta said.

The CNMI government began its efforts last year to develop a uniform procurement policy amid complaints of misuse of expenditure authority by public officials.

The CNMI AGO had cited that, among others, recent misuse of expenditure authority by public officials warrant the need to institute a strong centralized financial authority through the Finance Department.

CAMPUS BULLETIN

GCA cancels classes today

The Grace Christian Academy is informing students that classes are cancelled today due to the fire at the nearby factory garment. Classes will resume on Monday, Nov. 15, 2204. The cancellation of classes is prompted by heath and safety reasons.

KagES PTA meeting set

Kagman Elementary School would like to inform all parents and legal guardians that there will be a PTA meeting on Nov. 17, 2004, at 6:30pm, in the school cafeteria. All parents and legal guardians are encouraged to attend. Should you have any questions, call Maria Muna, PTA Secretary at 664-3911 or 256-1607.

Students to send letters to NMI soldiers

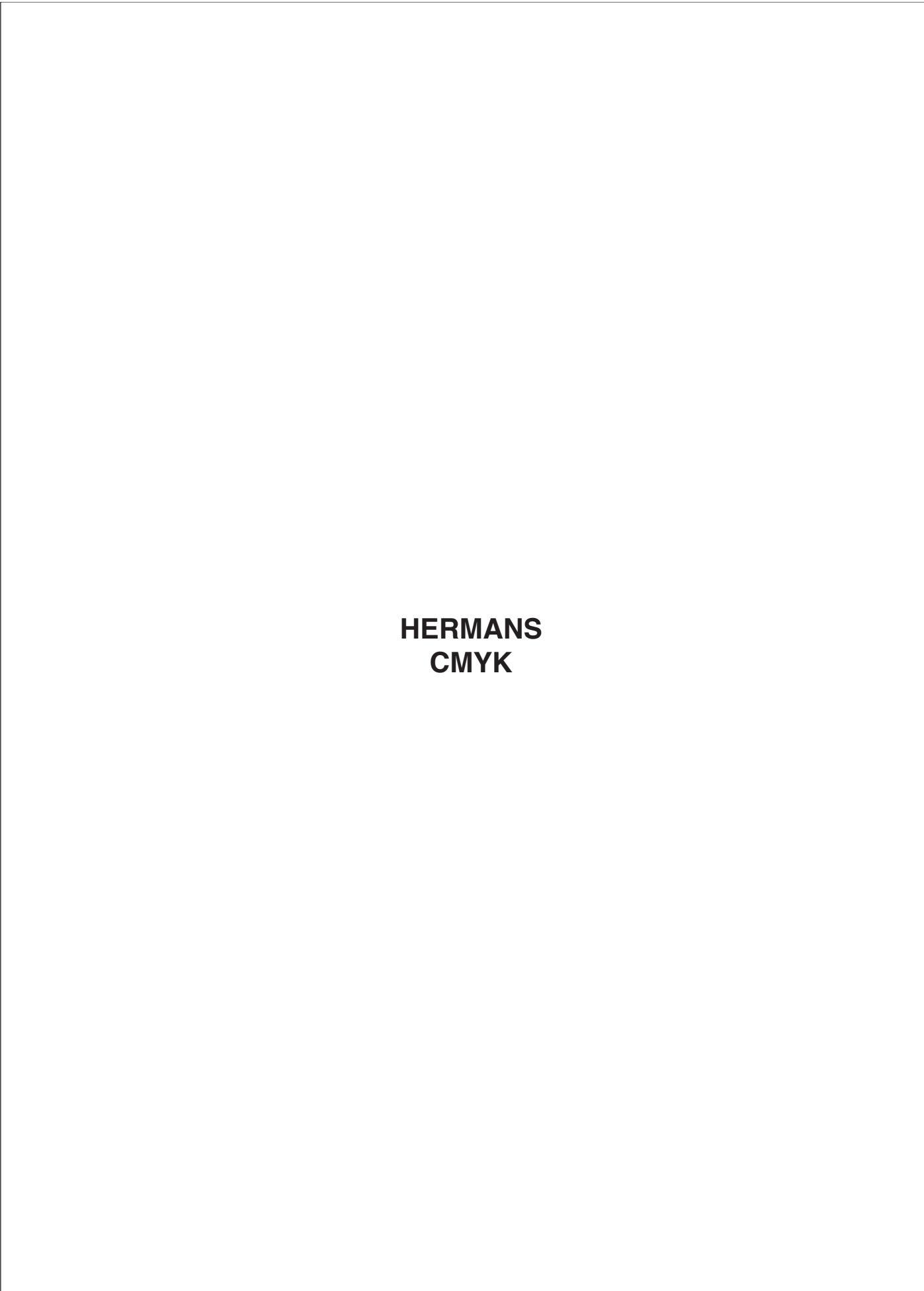
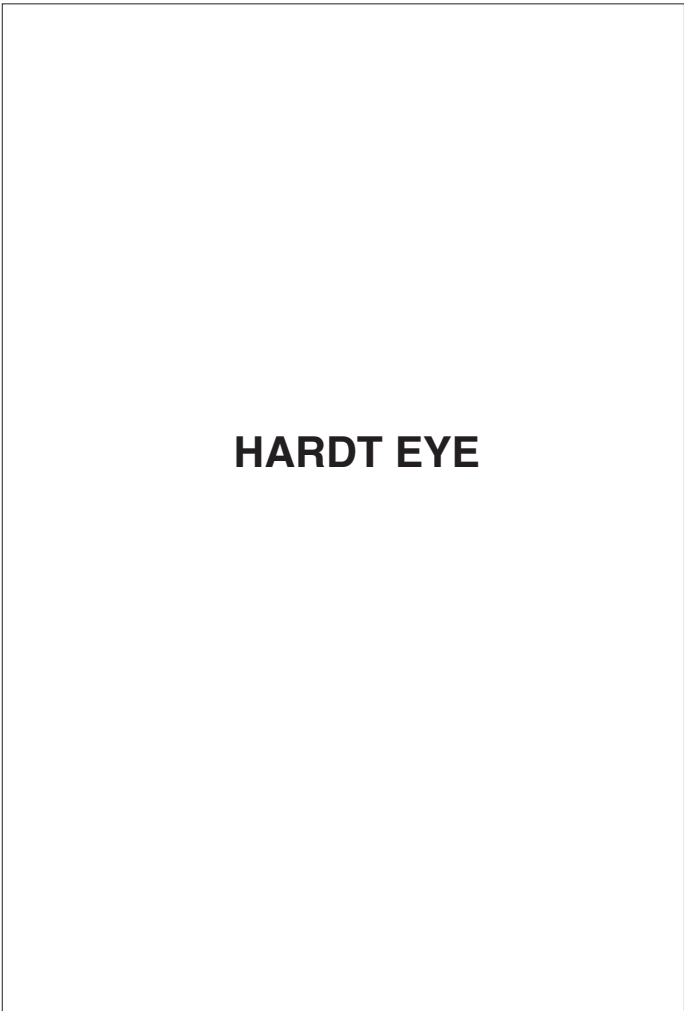
Public and private school students in the Commonwealth are writing holiday letters to CNMI military personnel who won’t be home in the CNMI for the holidays.

The letters are part of Project Holiday Cheer, which is being sponsored by the Office of the Governor, the Public School System, the Office of Military and Veterans Affairs, VFW Post 3457, the Pacific STAR Center for Young Writers, and the Pacific STAR Young Writers Foundation.

Packets will include letters and a t-shirt designed by one of the student illustrators.

“If you have a family member or know someone in the military who won’t be home for the holidays, please provide us with an address so a packet can be mailed from the CNMI community,” project organizers said in a statement.

There will be a Pacific STAR table at the Veteran’s Day ceremonies this Thursday, Nov. 11, 10:30am-12:30pm at the American Memorial Park. Individuals can also page Katharyn Tuten-Puckett at 236-READ and she will return the call to get the address.



CAMPUS BULLETIN

ORBOS

CNMI receives \$560K coral reef grant

REMEMBERING MOM

Gov. Juan N. Babauta pays his respects to his departed mother, Carmen Babauta, during All Saint's Day, Nov. 1.



LIBERTY DONES

By LIBERTY DONES
REPORTER

The Department of the Interior and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration have approved the CNMI's \$560,000 grant application for coral reef protection in the CNMI.

DOI Office of Insular Affairs director Nikola I. Pula, in a recent letter to Gov. Juan N. Babauta, said the funds will be used to carry out the projects identified by the local Coral Reef Advisory Group as high priority.

These include funding for a coral reef coordinator, an assistant attorney general dedicated to coral reef protection, marine enforcement operations, surveys of the Saipan lagoon, and an economic reef evaluation.

Pula lauded the CNMI for developing "a comprehensive, detailed,

and well-articulated set of proposals" to improve the management and protection of the CNMI's coral reef ecosystems.

Babauta said the funds will be used in 2004-2005 to address critical threats to CNMI coral reefs such as over-fishing, destructive fishing, and the harvest and collection of marine ornamentals; increasing development pressure, unmanaged land use and population growth; tourism and recreational overuse, and vessel groundings and anchoring; marine pollution, sedimentation, runoff, non-point source pollution, and marine debris; and lack of general public awareness.

The Coral Reef Initiative grant is given to the Governor's Office but the funds are shared with four other agencies involved in coral reef protection.

NMBA bartenders challenge gets support

By SHAN SEMAN
REPORTER

With its highly anticipated Grand Marnier Challenge approaching, the Northern Marianas Bartenders Association managed to obtain support from the Marianas Visitors Authority, which recently contributed \$200 to the event.

In a letter to NMBA president Lito Espino, MVA acting managing director Martin F. Duenas commended the NMBA for its effort in hosting the event.

"We support the idea that competitions like this enhance the skills in our bartenders, which will result in a higher quality of service for our visitors and local community," he said. "The [MVA] would like to thank you for your continuous efforts to promote a higher quality of service to our visitors, as we continue to promote the Northern Mariana Islands as the premier destination of choice in the Pacific."

The Bartender Cocktail Competition-Grand Marnier Challenge is scheduled to unfold on Tuesday, Nov. 9, 2004 at the Madonna Disco of the Saipan Grand Hotel, with an entrance fee of \$10 per participant.

"The competition is geared toward building self-confidence, pride and professionalism among bartenders and to develop a more competitive attraction to tourists here in CNMI," Espino said.

The competition, slated to begin at 8:30pm, includes over \$400 in total cash prizes and other items.

Espino said each company will be limited to two representatives but participants will not be allowed to wear any uniform or logos that would disclose the company being represented. Instead, participants must be dressed in black pants and an island attire shirt.

Whoever emerges as champion will receive \$150 plus a round trip ticket from Saipan to Manila and a cell phone, while first and sec-

ond runners up will receive \$100 and \$50. Best in Show earns \$100 plus a cell phone.

The top three winners will also receive a trophy and medal, while the Best in Show category winner will also be awarded a trophy.

All participants would receive certificates.

Aside from the NMBA, other sponsors include Grand Marnier, TITAN Imports, Pacific Trading Co., Western Sales Trading Co., Verizon, Triple B. Forwarders, Papago Island Charcoal, Tambayan Bar and Restaurant, and Elite Printing.

Already confirming participation are bartenders from Aqua Resort Club, Coffee Care and Restaurant, Dai-ichi Hotel Saipan Beach, Abyss Bar and Restaurant, Hafa Adai Hotel, Tambayan Bar and Restaurant, Saipan Grand Hotel, World Resort, and Pacific Islands Club.

For more information, contact Espino at 286-9982 or email at nmba_Saipan@yahoo.com.

FHB's parent firm acquires California, Midwest banks

The parent company of First Hawaiian Bank recently announced that it has completed two acquisitions that will make it the seventh-largest bank holding company in the western United States.

French-owned BancWest Corp. completed the acquisition of Community First Bankshares, Inc., parent company of Community First National Bank and Community First Insurance Inc., and USDB Bancorp, parent of Union Safe Deposit Bank.

Bancwest said the acquisitions will bring Bank of the West branches to 10 more states and increase its presence in California's Central Valley.

Branches of Community First National Bank and Union Safe Deposit will be integrated into Bank of the West in December and January, BancWest said in a news release.

The acquisitions will establish Bank of the West branches

in Arizona, Colorado, Iowa, Minnesota, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah, Wisconsin and Wyoming.

With the acquisitions, Honolulu-based BancWest, a subsidiary of French banking giant BNP Paribas, one of Europe's largest banks, will have about \$49 billion in assets and more than 530 branches in 17 states, Guam and Saipan.

"These acquisitions make BancWest one of the premier financial services franchises in the Western United States," said Walter A. Dods Jr., chairman and chief executive officer of BancWest. "These are two complementary banks that fit in well with BancWest both strategically and financially."

Honolulu-based BancWest announced in March it would pay \$32.25 a share to acquire the Fargo, N.D.-based parent company of Community First National Bank, which operates

156 branches in 12 states from California to Minnesota.

The bank announced in April that it would acquire Stockton, Calif.-based USDB Bancorp for \$245 million in cash in a deal to expand BancWest's presence in California, where USDB has 19 Union Safe Deposit branches in San Joaquin and Stanislaus Counties.

"Although the signs on the door will change, Community First and Union Safe Deposit customers will receive the same personal service that they're used to, because that's been a Bank of the West tradition for 130 years," said Don J. McGrath, president of BancWest.

Bank of the West has \$31.7 billion in assets with 297 branches in California, Oregon, New Mexico, Nevada, Washington and Idaho. BancWest's other principal subsidiary, First Hawaiian Bank, has 56 branches in Hawaii, three in Guam and two in Saipan.

YCO TRUE
VALUE

Opinion

Saipan Tribune

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Pacific Islands News Association

The price gouging stupor

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Letters to the Editor

Azmar’s worst nightmare

WHAT

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million dollar deal still awaits final determination.

The antagonists to the initial Sept. 5, 2003 application, Gov. Juan N. Babauta and CNMI consumer counsel Brian Caldwell, have gone a long way in opposing the proposed sale, asking the CTC to strip Verizon of ownership of the only fiber optic cable network in the CNMI.

Besides the audit being conducted to determine PTI's financial capability to keep Verizon running in the coming years, the divestiture request remains the only issue to be addressed in the proposed telecom purchase.

What would happen regardless of how the CTC would rule on the divestiture issue remains a question.

For PTI executive vice president for business development Jose Ricardo P.R. Delgado, he said he is confident that the CTC would rule in his company's favor.

"I think that by next week, CTC will have all the information it needs to come up with a decision," Delgado said via telephone from Manila. If PTI finally takes over Verizon's operations, it will be the first Filipino-owned investment in the United States' telecommunications industry.

Once the CTC hands down a favorable decision, Delgado said he is optimistic that the telecom deal could be consummated within two months.

He vowed to eventually infuse additional investments to improve Verizon's mobile and landline phones and DSL services.

"I see the economy growing in the coming years," Delgado said. At this stage, he said he has been talking to some Philippine companies for possible call center investments in the future.

"I hope they [CTC board] decide and get this [transaction] going," Delgado said. "We can work with all branches of government to render excellent service in the CNMI. Hopefully, before Christmas, we'll know [CTC's decision]."

Delgado, however, would not disclose PTI's plans if the CTC decides adversely on the divestiture issue, including the possibility of backing out from its proposed investment. "I'm of the opinion that that's not going to happen."

Govt discusses possibilities

Assistant attorney general Caldwell indicated that the government would conditionally consent to the consummation of the telecom deal if the CTC grants the divestiture request and such process proceeds with or without any party purchasing shares to co-own the fiber optic cable.

First, Caldwell said the audit report on PTI's financial capability should come out favorably for the company. If PTI continues to abide by all its other commitments and no other issues arise, Caldwell said the government would finally consent to the telecom purchase.

After all, there is the possibility that the government would purchase shares to co-own the fiber optic cable if the CTC rules to strip Verizon of part-ownership of the cable.

"We haven't gotten to that point yet so we don't know. We think the CNMI would take a good hard look at the pos-

sibility, since the CNMI is potentially one of the largest users. This could ultimately reduce government expenditures and save taxpayer's money," Caldwell said.

"Also, other governments have found that it is in the public interest to own a share of telecommunications infrastructure. For example, we understand that Hawaii owns shares in fiber optic cables connecting its islands," he added.

Caldwell said the CNMI has been pursuing grants from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security for this purpose.

On July 28, the governor formed an inter-agency group known as the CNMI's First Responder Task Force, vowing to break what he insists is Verizon's monopoly in the Commonwealth.

Saying that telecommunications monopoly undermines the CNMI's security, the governor said that consulting firm SPAWAR had assigned a consultant to help the Commonwealth pursue short- and long-term Homeland Security grants, which could range from \$5 million to \$8 million.

"The monopoly undermines our security," the governor said. "We must diversify our telecommunications choices, so that we will have more options during emergencies. That is why I will not allow this monopoly to continue."

While Caldwell believes that it is premature yet to speculate if private companies would be interested to co-own the cable, he said the government believes that each company that currently leases private line service from Verizon would look at their capacity needs and at least investigate the possibility of investing.

Firm to study cable stake

Choice Radio Inc., the company that operates i-Connect, remains neutral on the pendency of PTI and MTC's application for sale approval at the CTC. However, i-Connect would look at the possibility of purchasing shares to co-own the cable if the CTC would grant the governor's divestiture request, according to its general manager, Manny Andaya.

"If it's something that's reasonably priced, if we can afford it," Andaya said.

Andaya said i-Connect would have to first conduct a cost-benefit analysis on the possibility of purchasing cable shares.

I-Connect's provides two-way radio and cellular phone services. Since 2002, the company has been paying monthly fees for Verizon's cable services.

"We're fine with the arrangement right now," Andaya said. He added that, while he could not say whether or not current cable rates are exorbitant, i-Connect has maintained the profitability of its business operations. "It's [collecting fees] just right because they [Verizon] own it [cable]."

If PTI backs out?

Caldwell said other investors could bid to purchase Verizon if PTI backs out, should divestiture of the cable ownership proceed.

"Other parties have shown an interest in investing in this asset. We would have to wait to see which new company bids," he said. "Several companies may be interested. We understand that

Verizon has met with several [prospective buyers]."

Delgado did not indicate PTI's plans when asked if his company would back out from the sale should the cable divestiture proceed. He did not indicate if he would challenge such a CTC decision, stressing his confidence that the commission would decide favorably for PTI.

"I think that they've acted with a lot of integrity, and one of the reasons why I'm still here is because I actually believe that these guys want to do the right thing," said Delgado.

If the CTC decides against the government's divestiture request, there is a possibility that the issue could be challenged before judicial courts.

"The parties specifically reserve that right, regardless of which way the commission decides on this. If this occurs, we will have to discuss it with our clients and they will have to decide how they want to proceed," Caldwell said.

The FCC ruling

On Nov. 6, 2003, the Federal Communications Commission granted the application for transfer of control over Verizon's operations to PTI, a direct, wholly owned subsidiary of Prospector Investment Holdings Inc., a registered corporation in the Cayman Islands.

While the holding company's owners, father-and-son Ricardo and Jose Ricardo P.R. Delgado, are both Filipino citizens, the FCC noted that both the United Kingdom and the Philippines are both members of the World Trade Organization.

The FCC ruled that PTI is financially and technically qualified to continue with the operations of Verizon in the CNMI. The FCC said that the Delgados' expertise gained from operating ISLACOM—a telecommunications firm in the Philippines—is sufficient to demonstrate that PTI could maintain Verizon's operations, noting that ISLACOM had 10 times more than the assets of MTC.

This ruling effectively rejected the governor's opposition to the transaction, who earlier said that ISLACOM was a "miserable failure" in the Philippines.

"For telecommunications service providers, the commission has determined that the relevant product and geographic markets can include both U.S. domestic telecommunications service markets and telecommunications services between the U.S. and foreign points. We determine that the proposed transfer will not likely result in harm to competition in any relevant market and will likely yield tangible public interest benefits," the FCC said.

The FCC cited PTI's plan to provide expanded and innovative telecommunications services to local consumers and to invest in equipment and infrastructure.

Specifically, the commission noted PTI's plans to:

- introduce third generation wireless services;
- increase the capacity and coverage of wireless services;
- rollout broadband services on a mass market basis;
- increase broadband capacity to support such services as video on demand;
- compete with Guam as a regional hub by investing in fiber optic capacity from the continental U.S.

"The Department of Justice and the FBI now advise that the executive

agencies involved here have no objection to a grant of the transfer applications, provided that the commission conditions the grant on compliance with the terms of a network security agreement between the DOJ, FBI, Department of Defense and Department of Homeland Security, and PTI and MTC," the FCC ruling stated.

The settlement agreement

Despite the FCC's ruling in favor of the Verizon deal, the governor continued to oppose the transaction before the CTC.

On March 12, 2004, the CTC recognized the governor and the CNMI consumer counsel as intervenors in the pending application by PTI and MTC.

The governor insisted that he wanted to protect the public interest, saying that he would only consent to the consummation of the Verizon deal if his concerns were addressed.

A turning point in the longstanding dispute on the Verizon deal, however, came about when the applicants and the intervenors reached a 27-point settlement in early May before settlement hearing officer Sean Emory Frink. The government describes this development as a product of its effort to protect the public interest.

PTI agreed to invest a minimum of \$20 million in capital expenditures during the five-year period immediately following the closing of the telecom deal. As part of the settlement, PTI also assured that there would be no local rate hike for two years from the transaction's closing and that a trust fund would be established for the benefit of all Verizon employees. It also agreed to retain all existing Verizon employees in their respective positions.

In a nine-page Final Agreed Negotiation Report submitted to the CTC, the parties also agreed on several issues, including an end to inter-island long distance charges to Tinian and Rota and the retention of all Verizon employees.

Frink reported that the parties agreed on the proposed stock purchase from MTC, with the contingency that a final audit of the transaction and several issues that remain to be resolved be decided by the CTC board.

The parties also agreed that no toll would be charged for inter- and intra-island calls, including all phone calls and phones to ISP services. The parties agreed on the separation of wholesale and retail portion of Verizon's marketing operations and on the submission of an annual audit of financial statements to the CTC.

PTI also vowed to join the National Exchange Carrier Association as soon as possible upon closing the agreement. Its membership to NECA will provide assistance to rate and tariff development, industry database management, compliance auditing, economic forecasting, trend analysis, and regulatory policy analysis.

The dispute continues

The settlement, however, did not end the opposition to the sale. There remained at least three issues to be resolved: the government's proposal for the imposition of a performance bond on PTI, an audit of PTI's financial capability, and Verizon's monopoly of the fiber optic cable.

On May 4, the governor's lawyer, assistant attorney general James Liv-

ingstone, and Caldwell, asked the CTC for the establishment of special enforcement procedures that would require PTI to post a \$10-million bond to ensure that the company will not violate the agreed settlement.

The government's proposal outlined enforcement provisions providing for a minimum penalty of \$10,000 against PTI if it violates the settlement.

On June 17, however, the CTC's three-man board unanimously rejected the proposal for special enforcement provisions and the \$10-million bond. CTC chair Norman Tenorio, commissioners Mike Fitzgerald and Josephine Mesta unanimously voted to reject the proposal, with the chair saying that the imposition of the bond would just add to the cost of doing business, which would impact the consumers.

Tenorio said more faith should be placed on the CTC in its task to oversee PTI's operations, once its acquisition of the telecom company is consummated. He said PTI should be allowed to operate its affairs on a free enterprise setting.

The CTC ruling narrowed the dispute to two remaining issues: the financial audit and the monopoly.

Divesting cable ownership

On Sept. 21, the government asked the CTC to divest Verizon of 100-percent ownership of the CNMI's only submarine interisland cable network. The governor and Caldwell contended that the monopoly has resulted in higher telecommunication costs in the CNMI.

Caldwell and Livingstone proposed that all the assets of the submarine network, including the submerged and terrestrial fiber optic cable, be placed in a trust during the closing of the transaction between MTC and PTI.

They asked that the CTC appoint a trustee, who should hold a public auction for ownership interests in the trust within 90 days. The government proposed that the possible bidding be held open for one week.

Under the proposal, the trustee will have the power to sell the assets or ownership interest of the trust, up to 33 percent of the total capacity currently available on the interisland cable. No party or combination of parties may acquire more than 33 percent of the total ownership interests or assets of the trust. Unsold portions of the trust will devolve back to Verizon's ownership.

The government contended that the MTC has already recovered a substantial portion of its investment for the cable network. Yet MTC charges high rates to telecom companies that would lease a certain capacity from the cable network to provide services, the government said.

To illustrate its point, the government said the MTC charges \$7,143 per month to lease a T1 line between the CNMI and Guam, over 10 times more expensive than the price to lease the same capacity between Guam and Hawaii.

The government believes that divestiture will lead to investment opportunities, such as the establishment of server farms, data storage, and call centers.

PTI and MTC strongly opposed the divestiture request, saying that such an action, if granted by the CTC, would result in "an unprecedented demonstration of government overregulation

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Letters to the Editor

Don't punish the honest taxpayer

Since the inception of our constitutional government in 1978, power generation for Tinian and Rota have been and still is being subsidized to the tune of more than \$3 million per year.

I am not disputing the subsidy itself for it is central government's obligation to lend a hand where steep costs of reshipping fuel is passed on to local consumers in the two senatorial districts.

But CUC needs to be upfront with taxpayers in the business center why the proposed increase other than the recent hike in fuel costs from suppliers. No matter how CUC spins the truth,

the truth stands by and of itself. No amount of sleek syntax would change factual facts.

Too, several news articles have appeared in both papers about sponsors of foreign workers who have failed their employees. It boggles the mind how the department labor could issue renewals without verifying the following:

1. Sponsor/employer is in fact tax compliant and valid holder of a legal business license.
2. Tax withholdings are in fact filed according to requirements of the law.

To look the other way by silently using the friends and

family syndrome in each case results in what's known as financial leaks. It's a scheme that punishes honest taxpayers. Take stock, there are too many of these cases and it doesn't bode well for all the efforts being undertaken to rid the NMI of exploitation and extortion of the hard-earned pennies of foreign workers.

Both local and federal labor offices must descend on this case to protect the innocent from unscrupulous exploiters and extortionists.

John S. DelRosario, Jr.
As Gonno

Say that again?

I am requesting some clarification. In the Friday, Oct. 29, 2004 edition, you wrote an editorial concerning fairness in the media. One of the statements in that editorial had to do with Letters to the Editor section. You stated that the *Saipan Tribune* has adopted a policy of not printing anonymous letters. However, in today's paper, there is a letter that offers his or her opinion from a letter that was in the November 5th edition. And at the end of the letter, it says, "Name withheld by request." So, what is your policy again? Perhaps it's that when the letter reaches you, it must have who the author is, etc., but if the author asks their name to be withheld, then you do?

Personally, if this is your policy, I don't agree with it. I mean, what is this person, or any person for that matter afraid of? To my way of thinking, if you are

going to take the time to write a letter stating your opinion of someone else's opinion, you should have the guts to put your name on it. What Mr. Farrell wrote is his take on the issues. And what this name withheld by request person wrote is their take on the issues.

I'm not sending this to you just so it can be printed. If you choose to print it, that's totally up to you. I'm only asking for clarification of your policy. Thank you.

Scott A. West
Chalan Kiya

Editor's Note: If you read that column again, the relevant part states: "...The Tribune has adopted a policy of not printing anonymous letters, particularly those that are critical of persons. If you want to raise an accusing finger, then you should

be brave enough to stand by your accusations. At the same time, the paper will not allow itself to be exposed to possible charges of libel, hence any letter with libelous content will never make it to Page 11."

This refers to letters that we have been receiving that impugn the character of a person, while hiding behind the cloak of anonymity. These letters would accuse a person or persons of several character defects, of alleged corruption, of alleged favoritism, etc. Not only are they unfair attacks on character or behavior but they would also expose the Tribune to libel, hence the policy. A review of yesterday's letter show that it was not that kind of letter as it argued a different perspective on a previous letter to the editor. No character was assassinated and it focused on the issue at hand. I hope this clarifies matters for you.

ICONNECT
CMYK

Looking for 'We Drank Our Tears'

I am a long time "pen pal" of Marja Omni and Madissa Lisa Messo Omni who were featured as contributors in the "Star Young Writers" article mentioned in the *Saipan Tribune* on Oct. 25, 2004 on page 11 by Jaime Vergara.

I would very much like to buy a copy of the book mentioned in both Medissa's email to me (which included a photo copy of the Certificate she received as a participant) and the article..."We

Drank Our Tears."

Please inform me as to the best way of going about this. Naturally, I could use a credit card if that is the easiest way or I can send a check (business or personal as preferred) or even a Cashier's check is that would be best. I really do want a copy as Madissa is a very important person in my life. Also, I have been an "amateur historian" for many, many

years which includes much study about World War II.

Please let me know how I might obtain "We Drank Our Tears." If you would forward this communiqué to the appropriate person, I would be much appreciative!

Paul RW Anthony
949-361-5198
paulrw@sbcglobal.net
paul@imagesinstone.com

To Sen. Crisostimo

First of all, I know that you are putting your money where your mouth is when you said that you are seeking the highest elective post in November 2005. Remember that you are just a freshman in your seat right now. You have tried for

so long to be in that seat, so enjoy it because you have until 2008 for your re-election if you are planning to run again to retain your Senate seat. Don't leave your seat for the highest post just yet. Please prove to the people of Saipan

what have you done so far. Remember that one freshman tried for the second highest post but lost, backing up former Gov. Froilan Tenorio.

E. Manibusan
Kagman III

saying that such comparison did not consider the significant difference in the different markets' customer base. They said several transpacific telecommunications providers have placed their marine cable operations through Guam, making the ter-

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and interference with private enterprise."

The companies said there is no statutory and regulatory basis to divest Verizon of total cable ownership, on which

MTC's wholly-owned subsidiary, GTE Pacifica, has invested some \$14-16 million seven years ago.

The companies debunked the government's rate comparison of leased lines between Saipan and Guam and between Guam and Hawaii or Los Angeles,

CHINESE

From Page 1

displaced workers who have pending labor cases against their employers.

Karidat is a non-government organization that receives funding and donations from all sectors to assist marginalized individuals.

Karidat also receives \$100,000 in federal grants every year specifically to assist displaced foreign workers. Authorities said Karidat has \$5,000 to \$7,000 a month funding for displaced workers.

Despite this, some workers complained early this year of discrimination in the release of assistance. They had complained that they had to wait for an average of three hours before getting usually \$30 to \$50 worth of food assistance each. There

were times, they said, that they could not get anything at all after a long wait.

Based on the Nov. 2003 to Aug. 2004 report, Karidat assisted an average of less than 10 Chinese or Filipinos a month, except in December, which reached nearly 100 and August, 76.

Karidat executive director Angie Guerrero said in a previous interview that it was not her office’s intention to withhold assistance. She said her office implemented a new policy to avoid congestion in the office.

At the same time, there was a pending review of workers’ records to ensure they remain eligible for the assistance. This includes looking at the applicants’ bank accounts. This had prompted some workers to question the policy, citing inva-

sion of their rights to privacy.

Karidat had recently asked for additional funding out of the Compact Impact funds to assist indigent immigrants from the freely associated states—Federated State of Micronesia, Marshalls, and Palau—a request that Gov. Juan N. Babauta had denied.

“Many of these people are unskilled and have been unable to secure permanent employment...they have resorted to Karidat for food and shelter assistance as their only source of relief,” Guerrero said in her letter to Babauta. “Due to limited funds or food supply, we have on several occasions denied their request for food. This is really painful, especially when there are children involved. I am humbly requesting for your kind and compassionate consideration

in awarding a small portion of the Compact Aid funds to Karidat.”

Guerrero’s letter showed that from an average of 400 welfare families from 1998 to 2001, the number dropped to over 200 in 2003.

Babauta said, though, that this “s a good trend.”

Increasing the funding would “lead to the adverse outcome of more immigrants coming to the CNMI,” he said.

Babauta said Compact Impact have been used to benefit all people in the CNMI, and not just a select group of immigrants.

“I believe that we should continue this practice by investing the grants in education and health and other infrastructure and institutions that all our people can use and enjoy,” he said.

HIGHER

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surcharge would actually be effective for only 24 days—from the Dec. 7 implementation date targeted by CUC until the end of 2004.

In response, Williams said CUC did not intend to make it so. He explained that the fuel surcharge proposal was brought up by the CUC board of directors as early as March this year. However, because the board required a thorough study of the plan before approving it, the proposal was not presented to the public until now.

“We wanted it implemented at least by September. We didn’t plan for it to be implemented just before the end of the year. That’s just the way it worked out,” Williams said.

Held from 7pm to 10pm Wednesday, the three-hour public hearing provided venue for questions, comments, and objections from the less than 50 participants.

Former senator Ramon “Kumoi” Guerrero, who was among the crowd, reprimanded CUC for conducting the public hearing after the fuel surcharge had been approved by the board. He said this move made the conduct of the public hearing “rather awkward” and “meaningless.”

Guerrero also urged CUC to present exact information to the people on how much it costs to generate power for each island. He said consumers, particularly Saipan residents, have the right to know how much of their bill is used to subsidize Tinian and Rota residents.

Further, the ex-senator raised concern that the imposition of a fuel surcharge

might drive businesses and other consumers to generate their own power. “Instead of receiving more money to pay for fuel, you might lose revenue instead,” he said.

Far East Broadcasting Company, the biggest residential/nonprofit customer, asked CUC to consider the hardship the fuel surcharge will present to non-profit organizations.

Company executive director David Creel noted that electricity is the single largest expense of his organization, which operates a religious shortwave radio station in Marpi.

“If the proposed 3.5 cent fuel surcharge fee is implemented, our electric bill will increase by about \$5,000. Starting in January of 2005, it could be much more since an additional increase is proposed at that time. For a nonprofit organization which operates on contributions, this is a very difficult cost to absorb. We quite simply do not have an extra \$5,000 per month,” Creel said.

He added that it is especially difficult to plan for such an increase on such short notice.

“If CUC board decides that this fuel surcharge fee is indeed necessary, I respectfully ask that it be delayed for at least six months to give businesses, non-profit organizations, and individual consumers a chance to try to find ways to pay for this increase in expenses. Perhaps a ‘phased-in’ approach would be appropriate,” Creel said.

A number of other participants urged CUC to look at lowering the adjustment rate, be more aggressive in collecting from delinquent customers, and find ways to save money on operations.

TIME

From Page 1

all,” said Tenorio.

This means that a new delegate bill would have to be reintroduced during the 109th Congress.

Tenorio said this is just a matter of redrafting or updating the bill, “which is not a problem.” He noted that the House Committee on Resources, which unanimously approved the bill recently, would have the same composition next year.

The committee is chaired by California Republican congressman Richard Pombo, who

led a visiting team to the CNMI early this year.

“The committee chairman would take jurisdiction. We have the same supporters in the committee,” said Tenorio.

Earlier, committee member and Indiana congressman Dan Burton, who visited Saipan a few weeks ago, expressed confidence over the passage of the delegate bill.

If enacted into law, the bill would provide for the first election of a CNMI Delegate in the federal general elections in 2006.

The bill was originally introduced by Pombo and ranking member Nick J. Rahall.

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ritory a telecom hub within Asia and between the United States.

PTI and MTC also projected that divesting Verizon of total cable ownership would adversely impact the company’s ability to invest significantly on capital improvement in the future, after PTI agreed to fund capital improvements with some \$20 million over

the next five years.

As of yesterday, there is no word yet if the audit being conducted by Delloiite and Touche has already been completed.

The answers to the big question mark on what lies ahead of the proposed Verizon transaction, which has been awaiting the audit report and the ruling on the divestiture request, lies with the CTC, the board members of which would meet on Tuesday next week.

HYUNDAI
CMYK

SHEFA board submit 3rd batch of scholarship recipients

Saipan Mayor Juan B. Tudela and the Saipan Higher Education Financial Assistance board will forward the scholarship list of recipients for Saipan’s Priority Study to the Secretary of Finance today, Nov. 12, 2004.

The request to the Finance chief is the third series of award this year the Office of the Mayor of Saipan and the SHEFA board will have awarded since the successful launching of this new financial assistance catering to Saipan residents who are attending U.S.-accredited colleges and universities at home and abroad.

Saipan’s priority fields of study were established in close collaboration with the Saipan business community, the local Division of Labor Employment Services, and a research report from a recent Department of the Interior-funded workforce improvement plan. These fields of study/career are now a permanent part of the Saipan Higher Education Financial Assistance rules and regulations.

The priority study scholarship is \$1,500 for Fall 2004 and \$1,500 for Spring 2005, bringing the total to \$3,000 in

additional assistance annually, on top of the 3.5 GPA academic performance scholarship of \$4,000 and the \$1,200 to \$2,000 SHEFA grant.

Of the approximately 200 Saipan applicants for Fall 2004, almost 50 percent

qualify for the priority study scholarship, but only 25.5 percent for the highly competitive 3.5 GPA scholarship.

To qualify for SHEFA’s financial assistance, a college student must be a bona fide resident of Saipan, including the Northern

Islands; must be enrolled in a U.S. accredited college or university on full-time status; not taking any remedial classes; and a U.S. citizen or a U.S. permanent resident.

For more information about SHEFA and the as-

sistance program log on to www.saipanshefa.com or call the SHEFA Office at 664-2585 and ask for Sue or the Office of the Mayor of Saipan at 235-7444 and ask for Florence Stephen. The e-mail address is contact@saipanshefa.com.

Deadline set for EAP scholarship

The Educational Assistance Program Winter/Spring 2005 deadline is Dec. 15, 2004.

EAP is for those who have completed their high school requirement and desires to pursue a postsecondary education (certificate to bachelor’s degree).

EAP provides funding to assist defray educational cost for eligible individuals for the following program:

- on-island/offisland enrolled at an accredited institution as a fulltime status;
- on-island fulltime employee who desires to pursue a postsecondary education on a part-time status;
- on-island students taking courses online which are not offered at Northern Marianas College.

Upon availability of funds, EAP offers financial assistance for the following programs: Graduate, Juris Doctor or Doctor of Medicine.

Application must be received or postmarked no later than Dec. 15, 2004. If you have submitted an application for Fall 2004, the application is still valid. Supporting documents (may be submitted at a later date) are U.S. passport and/or birth certificate issued by the court, an acceptance letter into the school you plan to attend, the most recent official sealed transcript and proof of 2002 & 2003 CNMI residency.

Additionally, other scholarship application for the 2004/2005 is now available. Log on to www.cnmischolarship.com for more details.

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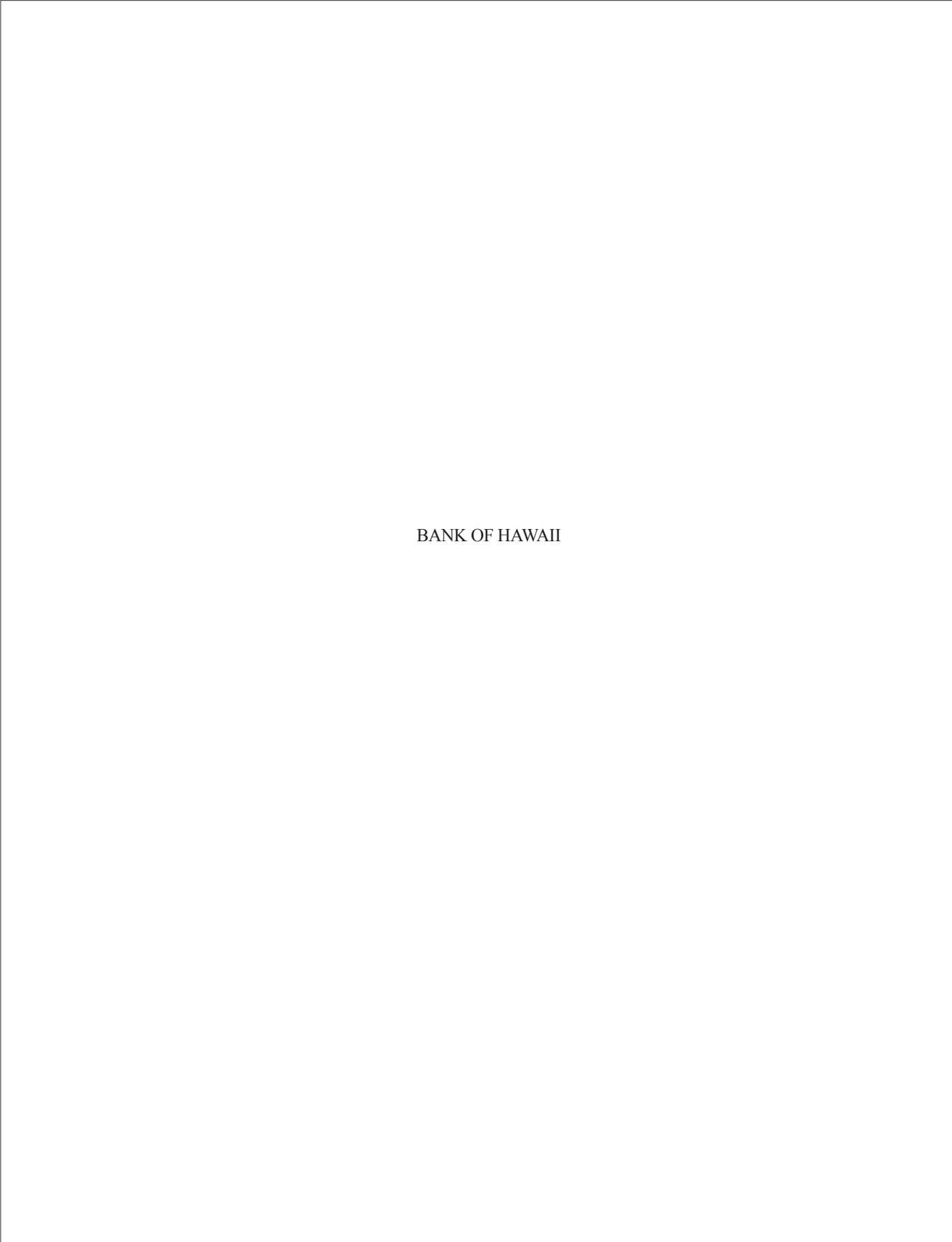
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World

Palestinian speaker Fattouh to be sworn in

RAMALLAH, West Bank (AP)—The Palestinian parliament speaker will be sworn in as Palestinian Authority president, in place of Yasser Arafat, in the coming hours, a Cabinet minister said Thursday.

Arafat died early Thursday at a Paris hospital.

Palestinian officials have said they want to ensure a smooth transition. Under Palestinian law, Parliament Speaker Rauhi Fattouh, a vir-

tual unknown, is to become caretaker president until elections are held in 60 days.

"We can be certain transition will be smooth, and the Palestinian people deserve to have free and fair elections," Palestinian Cabinet minister Saeb Erekat told The Associated Press.

He urged the United States

to ensure that elections can be held. In the past, Palestinian officials have said they cannot organize a vote until Israeli troops withdraw from West Bank towns and cities they reoccupied in a major military offensive in 2002.

Erekat said he expected Fattouh to be sworn into office in the coming

hours, but did not have details on the arrangements.

Arafat held three top jobs—president of the Palestinian Authority, chief of the PLO and leader of the ruling Fatah movement. The PLO's No. 2, Mahmoud Abbas, is the top contender for taking Arafat's place as Palestinian leader.

Immediately after Arafat's burial, the 18-member PLO Executive Committee is to decide on a new PLO chief.

It is believed Abbas would win the vote, thus becoming Arafat's successor, at least in the interim. Abbas, known as Abu Mazen, has been acting as caretaker leader, along with Prime Minister Ahmed Qureia.

Fattouh, 55, grew up in the Rafah refugee camp in Gaza. He left Gaza for studies abroad in the 1960s, joined Fatah in 1968 and returned from exile in 1994, along with Arafat and

other Palestinian officials.

In the first Palestinian general elections in 1996, he was elected to the parliament on a Fatah slate. In 2003, he was appointed agriculture minister, and a year later was chosen speaker, replacing Qureia who became prime minister.

Fattouh is a midlevel Fatah activist, and did not rise to prominence in parliament. He was chosen as speaker as a compromise candidate.

The enigma of Yasser Arafat

By **RAVI NESSMAN**
ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

RAMALLAH, West Bank (AP)—Hunted as a terrorist, hailed as a peacemaker, Yasser Arafat succeeded in forcing the Palestinian tragedy upon the world's conscience but failed to deliver the independent state his people yearned for.

A man of mystery and paradox, his four decades on the international stage were a saga of extraordinary reincarnations.

There was Arafat on the run from both Israeli and Arab armies; Arafat, reviled as godfather of the terrorism that blew up jetliners and killed Israeli Olympic athletes; Arafat addressing the United Nations, offering the gun or olive branch; Arafat in a bunker in bomb-torn Beirut, and in Oslo receiving the Nobel Peace Prize; Arafat welcomed by U.S. President Bill Clinton, then shunned by U.S. President George W. Bush.

There was Arafat the virtual president of Palestine, and finally, in a sense, Arafat back at square one—besieged in his devastated West Bank headquarters by Israeli tanks and threatened once more with exile.

Arafat's last days were surrounded by confusion and high drama: rumors swirled about his condition as his 41-year-old wife, Suha, zealously guarded access to his bedside and publicly accused the Palestinian leadership of trying to usurp his powers. He had groomed no successor, nor was he known to have left any accounting for the vast sums of money he controlled.

His passing also closed a chapter of history: He was among the last of a breed of Arab leaders who came to prominence preaching revolution and secular socialism, only to see them overshadowed by the rise of radical Islam.

The danger is that with no clearcut political heir to rally them, Palestinians may now fragment under local leaders scattered across the Mideast map.

Rarely seen without his keffiyeh, flowing down his shoulder to resemble a map of Palestine, Arafat became one of the

world's most familiar figures after addressing the U.N. General Assembly in New York in 1974, wearing a holster and carrying a sprig. "Today I have come bearing an olive branch and a freedom fighter's gun," he said. "Do not let the olive branch fall from my hand."

To many Israelis the paunchy 5-foot, 2-inch (1.52-meter-tall) Palestinian was a demon bent on their annihilation, reviled by the late Menachem Begin in 1982 as "that despicable guy with hair on his face."

Yet a decade later that same man, his stubble gone white but still wearing olive-green uniform and checkered keffiyeh, would stand on the White House lawn with Clinton and Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and shake hands on a peace deal that formally recognized Israel's right to exist.

The agreement also granted the West Bank and Gaza Strip limited self-rule under a Palestinian Authority, and allowed Arafat to set foot on Palestinian land for the first time in at least 27 years. He shared the 1994 Nobel Peace Prize with Rabin and Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres, and in 1996, in the Palestinians' first election, he was chosen to head the authority.

But the peace process quickly became mired in mutual accusations of bad faith and treaty violations, Rabin was assassinated by a Jewish extremist, Islamic bombers blew up buses in Israeli cities, and more Jewish settlements went up on Palestinian land. The peace effort fell apart in 2000 and a new round of violence broke out that has killed some 4,000 people, three-quarters of them Palestinian.

Israel and the United States placed much of the blame on Arafat, claiming he had missed his best chance of winning Palestinian statehood, and in his final years, even many of his own people privately whispered that Arafat had brought them little hope of a better life.

International pressure forced Arafat to share power with a prime minister in April 2003, but he fell out first with one, then another when he resisted

giving up any real prerogatives.

Banking on his stature as a symbol of anti-Israel defiance, Arafat sidestepped street protests and riots this summer set off by disenchantment over corruption, lawlessness and a moribund economy. He made a rare acknowledgment of wrongdoing and promised change, but offered no specifics. And, although weakened, he held on to ultimate authority.

Meanwhile, he had been living for nearly three years in his battered, sandbagged headquarters in the West Bank town of Ramallah, hemmed in by Israeli armor while Israeli officials talked openly of exiling or even killing him.

Alongside such displays of fortitude, a streak of vanity was evident. He rarely appeared without the keffiyeh covering his bald spot. He liked to be called "Mr. President," even when he had no country to preside over. He surrounded himself with trappings of statehood—marching bands and motorcades—long before he tackled Gaza City's garbage problem. A protruding lower lip made him look petulant when angry.

The longtime bachelor surprised his followers in 1991 by getting married, at age 62, to his secretary, Suha Tawil, then 28. A daughter, named Zahwa after Arafat's mother, was born in July 1995.

Arafat showed little affection for his family in public—it was weeks before he was seen cradling Zahwa for the first time, and Suha Arafat frequently complained she was cut off from her husband by a tight circle of aides. She and her daughter moved to France after the second Palestinian uprising erupted in the fall of 2000.

And there was mystery about the man, not least about his birthplace: Cairo, Egypt, most sources agreed, yet the Palestinian Authority's Web site said Jerusalem and other sources said Gaza. He was born Rahman but later took the name Yasser, apparently in honor of a slain Palestinian rebel. To many he was Abu Ammar, his nom de guerre, or al-Khityar, the wise old man.



Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat pauses during a meeting in his headquarters in the West Bank town of Ramallah in this Feb. 2, 2002 file photo.
AP

crmo

cpa



AP

Members of the Black Watch board a RAF Puma helicopter on route to the Black Watch Battle group's forward operating base "Springfield" on the east bank of the Euphrates river, Wednesday Nov. 10, 2004, 25 miles south of Baghdad.

‘Slaughterhouses’ for Iraq hostages found

By EDWARD HARRIS
AP WRITER

FALLUJAH, Iraq (AP)—U.S. troops, on the verge of gaining control of the city, fought pockets of resistance in this former militant stronghold Wednesday and uncovered what the Iraqi commander said were “hostage slaughterhouses” in which foreign captives had been killed.

Insurgents sought to open a second front, mounting attacks outside Fallujah and kidnapping three relatives of Prime Minister Ayad Allawi. Militants also claimed to have abducted 20 Iraqi National Guard troops in Fallujah.

Throughout the day, Americans hit the militants with artillery and mortars, and warplanes fired on the city’s main street and market as well as Jolan, one of several neighborhoods where troops were skirmishing with militants.

In what could be a sign of progress, the Marines began turning over Jolan to Iraqi forces, signaling that Marines consider the area relatively secure. Jolan was considered one of the strongest positions held by militants inside Fallujah.

Even so, an Associated Press reporter embedded with them witnessed continued clashes in Jolan and smoke billowing from the heart of the neighborhood late Wednesday. Fireballs and tracer fire lit up the night sky over Fallujah and the sounds of artillery echoed in the streets.

In one of the most dramatic clashes of the day, snipers fired on U.S. and Iraqi troops from the minarets of the Khulafah Al Rashid mosque, the military said. Marines said the insurgents waved a white flag at one stage but then opened fire, BBC’s embedded correspondent Paul Wood reported. The troops called in four precision airstrikes that

destroyed the minarets but left the mosque standing.

Pool footage showed U.S. forces battling insurgents in a neighborhood surrounding the mosque. Troops were pinned down by gunfire on a rooftop, forced to hit the deck and lay on their stomachs.

“We’re taking fire from the mosque,” one of the Americans said. Forces returned fire, blasting the mosque—a large domed building flanked by two minarets—and sending up clouds of debris.

“When they’re using a mosque to do command and control for insurgents and kill my fellow Marines and soldiers and airmen that are out here - no holds barred, the gloves are off,” said Marine Staff Sgt. Sam Mortimer.

Tank gunners also opened fire on insurgents in a nearby five-story apartment building, and flames shot from several windows.

The top U.S. commander in Iraq, Gen. George Casey, told President Bush on Wednesday that his troops were “making very good progress” securing Iraq.

“He said that things are going well in Fallujah,” Bush said, adding that his Iraq commanders had not asked for more troops. The U.S. military has sent up to 15,000 U.S. and Iraqi troops into the battle, backed by tanks, artillery and attack aircraft.

Lt. Gen. John F. Sattler, the commanding general of the 1st Marine Expeditionary Force, said insurgents had been reduced to “small pockets, blind, moving throughout the city. And we will continue to hunt them down and destroy them.”

“When they attempted to flee from one zone to another they were killed,” Sattler said. “We feel very comfortable that none of them moved back toward the north or escaped on the flanks.”

At least 71 militants have been killed by early Wednesday,

the third day of intense urban combat, the military said. As of Tuesday night, 10 U.S. troops and two members of the Iraqi security forces had been killed. Marine reports Wednesday said 25 American troops and 16 Iraqi soldiers were wounded. There was no new report Wednesday on U.S. military deaths.

Fallujah, 40 miles west of Baghdad, is the centerpiece of the Sunni Muslim insurgency that has stymied U.S. efforts to secure Iraq and prepare for national elections that are scheduled for January.

The latest kidnappings were part of a surge of attacks outside the city - an attempt by militants to divert U.S.-Iraqi forces.

The violence killed at least 28 people across the country Wednesday - including 10 who died when a car bomb targeted a police patrol in the capital after sunset. U.S. troops clashed with insurgents in Baghdad and the cities of Ramadi, Mosul and Latifiyah.

“As we put the clamp on Fallujah, we expect stepped-up attacks elsewhere in the country,” said Capt. P.J. Batty, of the 3rd Battalion 5th Marine Regiment.

“But then we can stop their command and control,” said the 33-year captain from Park City, Utah. “Once we see where their fires are coming from, no problem, we just call in air support or artillery.”

One Marine officer estimated U.S. and Iraqi forces controlled about 70 percent of the city, but the commander of the Iraqi force said he believed the figure was closer to 50 percent.

U.S. troops were also skirmishing with insurgents late Wednesday in the Wihdah and Muhandiseen neighborhoods, according to Iraqi journalist Abdul Qader Saadi, who said he saw some damaged and burnt armored vehicles and tanks.

Foreigners evacuate Ivory Coast en masse

ABIDJAN, Ivory Coast (AP)—Angry crowds chanted “all whites out” as Western nations launched one of the largest evacuations of Africa’s post-independence era Wednesday. French soldiers in boats plucked trapped countrymen from the banks of lagoons.

Convoys shuttled foreigners to the airport passing through “very virulent” crowds of loyalist youths on a route littered with burned vehicles and an abandoned roadblocks of smoldering tires, U.N. spokesman Philippe Moreux said.

“It’s a very hostile crowd,” he said. “They’re chanting slogans and insults, things like, ‘All the whites out,’ ‘Everybody catch a white.’”

France, the United States and other nations ordered commercial jets to fly out thousands of foreigners after attacks on civilians and peacekeepers. Violence erupted after government forces renewed attacks on rebels, ending a more than one-year ceasefire in the country’s civil war.

Nine French peacekeepers and an American civilian died in a government air attack late last week, prompting the French to destroy Ivory Coast’s tiny air force.

The retaliation sparked violence by loyalist youths, who took to the streets waving machetes, iron bars and clubs and attacking white expatriates.

On Wednesday, the U.S.



Foreign nationals gather around the check-in section of the airport in Abidjan, Ivory Coast, on Wednesday, Nov. 10, 2004. AP

Embassy and others sent escorts into the city, fetching Americans, Canadians, Spaniards and others. Spain, Belgium and Italy sent military cargo planes to aid in the evacuations. French officials said three jets with space for about 250 people each would run shuttles to Paris and to Dakar, Senegal, likely for days.

As the convoys rounded up foreigners from their homes for evacuation, Ivory Coast’s state TV alternately appealed for calm and for a mass uprising against the French, the country’s former colonial rulers. French citizens stranded on lagoons, which dot the capital, were pulled to safety by French soldiers in boats.



Bosnian Serb govt apologizes for massacre

BANJA LUKA, Bosnia-Herzegovina (AP)—The Bosnian Serb government issued an apology Wednesday for the 1995 massacre of 7,800 Muslim civilians in Srebrenica, saying it “shares the pain” of the victims’ families.

The apology came after the government reviewed a Bosnian Serb commission’s final report on the worst massacre of civilians in Europe since World War II. The government session was last month, but the conclusions were not made public until Wednesday.

“The report makes it clear that enormous crimes were committed in the area of Srebrenica in July 1995,” the Bosnian Serb government said.

“The Bosnian Serb Government shares the pain of the families of the Srebrenica victims, is truly sorry and apologizes for the tragedy.”

Burundi’s leader fires Tutsi VP

BUJUMBURA, Burundi (AP)—Burundi’s Hutu president dismissed his Tutsi vice president Wednesday, but agreed to name a Tutsi replacement in an effort to save a fragile power-sharing agreement, officials said.

President Domitien Ndayizeye accused Vice President Alphonse Kadege of undermining efforts to end Burundi’s 11-year civil war by failing to support a constitutional referendum, presidential spokesman Pancrace Cimpaye said.

A permanent constitution—to replace an interim one that expired Nov. 1—is a key step in a peace agreement brokered in 2000. The peace deal also calls for the main Hutu and Tutsi parties to share the presidency and vice presidency. The dismissal of a key member of the most influential Tutsi party could undermine the deal.

Russia, US disarmament said to slow down

MOSCOW (AP)—Disputes between Russia and the United States over funding and lucrative contracts are hampering an international effort to destroy the world’s largest chemical weapons arsenal, experts said Wednesday.

With a commitment to destroy 44,000 tons of chemical weapons by 2012, Russia has eagerly courted foreign funding. More than 20 countries—including members of the Group of Eight—have pledged money for the program, which has been beset by shortfalls.

Western countries have spent hundreds of millions of dollars but only a fraction of that money has been channeled through the Russian government with most going directly to contractors—the vast majority of them non-Russian.

Murder inspires wave of Dutch attacks

UDEN, Netherlands (AP)—The brazen daylight murder of a filmmaker who criticized Islamic fundamentalism has shattered Holland’s fabled tranquility.

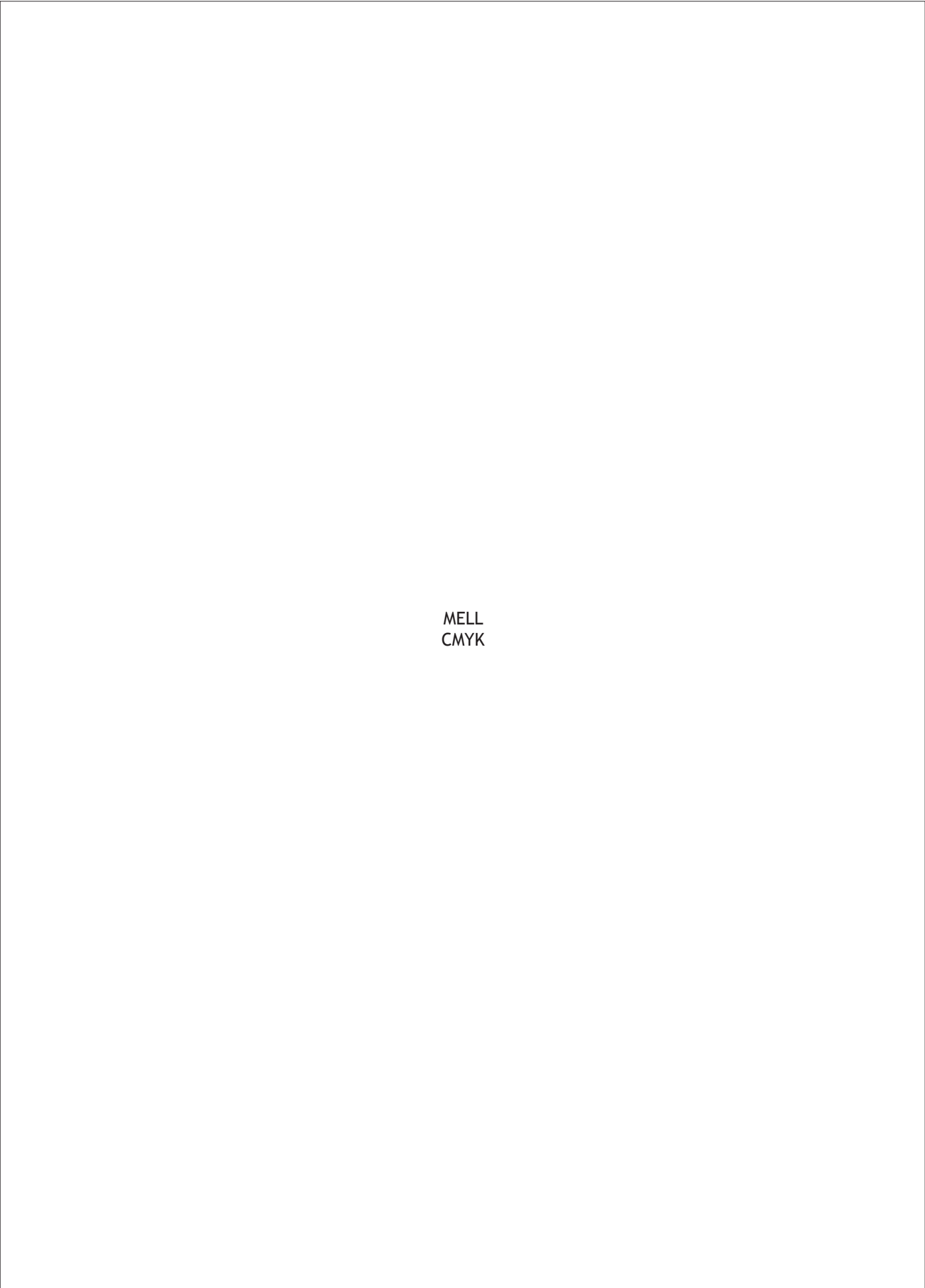
A wave of attacks on mosques and churches—and a firebombing at a Muslim elementary school—is raising troubling questions about Dutch society’s relations with a large and increasingly restive Muslim minority.

Marion Cappendijk can’t understand the outburst of violence. “We are so tolerant here,” she said Wednesday as she looked at the smoldering rubble of the school, the 14th Muslim building attacked by arsonists, bombers or graffiti sprayers in five days.

The Nov. 2 killing of Dutch filmmaker Theo van Gogh, allegedly by an Islamic extremist, unleashed powerful resentments that have shaken many Dutch.

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Life & Style



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“When great visuals are combined with great music, the effect is nothing short of magic. Next time you’re at the theater, don’t just watch—listen. You may be opening yourself up to a whole new world of enjoyment at the multiplex.”



By JOE WEINDL
Special to the
Saipan Tribune

WALLACE



Bah humbug, and merry Christmas!



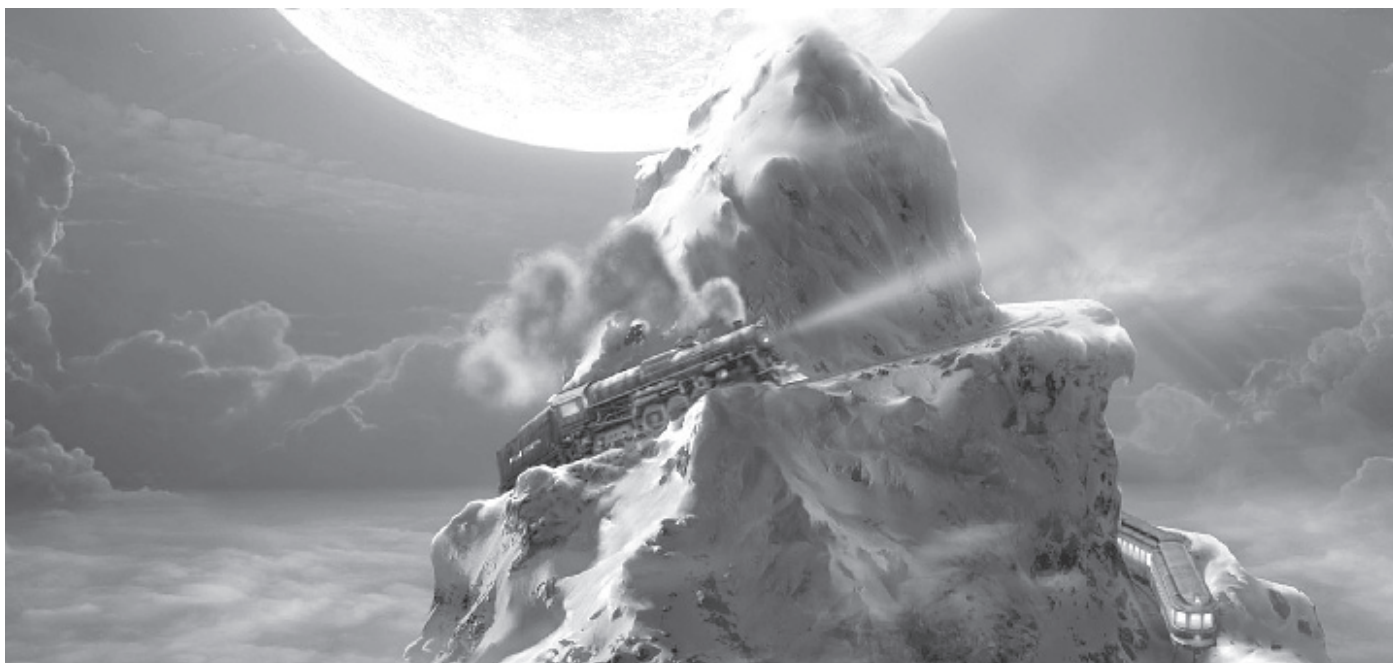
Christmas is bunk. And yet, it remains the single greatest day of the year.

Long ago, America's biggest corporations realized the profits they could yield with St. Nick, so now the cheeriest of holidays is a mindless, materialistic ritual of clichés, fake plastered smiles, and financially strapped families struggling to purchase the bevy of toys they can't afford. Beneath the veneer of commercialism, however, remains the core of Christmas, a genuine feeling of warmth and benevolence, and a truly special time to share with family and friends. Jesus, I'm sure, would be both delighted and appalled

to know that the celebration of his birthday has become an odd combination of the beautiful and grotesque.

What happened? This isn't how I remember Christmas used to be. What happened, of course, is that I grew up. So did you. With decades of life experience, we've become a little wiser, and a whole lot more cynical. I don't know about you, but I, for one, would like very much to be able to recapture the yuletide splendor I once knew this time of year.

With that very purpose in mind, *The Polar Express*, written/directed by Robert Zemeckis (*Forrest Gump*, *Cast Away*) and starring Tom Hanks, is destined to be a Holiday classic. Geared



AP

A scene from soon to be released film, "The Polar Express," distributed by Warner Bros. Pictures. It is one of eleven films which are eligible to be nominated for the best animated feature film Oscar, the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences announced, Thursday, Nov. 4, 2004. Just three of them will be nominated.

primarily for younger children, *The Polar Express* will help them hold onto the magic they already know, and will help older children and adults, alike, find what they have lost.

Based on the popular children's book, written by Chris Van Allsburg, *The Polar Express* tells the story of a young boy for whom Christmas is beginning to lose its charm. He clearly wants to believe in Santa, but reality is making it increasingly difficult for him to do so, and this insight is dampening his spirit. This is what we learn in the first sixty seconds of the movie, before the clock stops at five till midnight on Christmas Eve, and the Polar Express train arrives at his doorstep to whoosh him off to the North Pole.

The Polar Express shares some qualities with both *The Wizard of Oz*, and *Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory*. "Hero Boy" (Hanks & Daryl Sabara) is accompanied on his adventure to a strange, far off land, by a number of other children. Like Dorothy et. al, "Hero Boy" and his companions each are in need of a special life lesson. "Hero Boy" seeks faith. "Hero Girl" needs confidence.

"Lonely Boy" desires trust. And "Know-it-All" could use a little humility. Along the way, "Hero Boy" meets a handful of strange characters and takes a few roller coaster rides, before finally coming face to face with the big bowl full of jelly, himself (also acted by Hanks). There aren't any wicked witches or flying monkeys in *The Polar Express*, but there are more than a few elves, spookily reminiscent of the Oompa Loompas.

The animation process used in *The Polar Express* is somewhat new. Pioneered by video games like John Madden Football, and used most masterfully for the character Gollum, in *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy, the process is known as either motion capture or, as *The Polar Express*' producers are calling it, "performance capture". Sensors are placed in crucial places on the actors' bodies and faces. Their performance is captured by a computer, and then animated. Hanks plays a total of six roles, most noticeably as the sage train conductor. Needless

to say, his work is brilliant.

Why go to such great lengths (the process ain't cheap) to animate a movie when you've already got the actors performing for you? The answer is clear when you see the movie.

Much of the allure of the book is due to the wondrous illustrations. The visual artistry in the movie matches its source material, fantastically, and it just wouldn't have been possible in the real world.

Zemeckis likes to play tricks with the camera (or in this case, the virtual camera), and he's very good at it. Remember the leaf blowing in the wind in *Forrest Gump*, setting us up, so beautifully, to watch Forrest blown this way and that, by the winds of life? There's a similar scene in *The Polar Express*. Although it doesn't carry the weight of the leaf scene, it's sure neat to look at. Zemeckis and his cinematographers have a few other tricks up their sleeves, but it's better to watch their handiwork than to read a description of it.

The greatest recommendation I can give *The Polar Express* is in the message it delivers. Instead of feeding us a bunch of tired, trite, used up Christmas cheer blah, blah, blah, *The Polar Express* points out that belief is a choice, and the magic of Christmas comes from your heart. It's all about internal control vs. external control. Christmas will be special if you choose to make it that way. As far as I'm concerned, that's an invaluable lesson for children to learn, one that will serve them well, all twelve months of the year.

Similarly, what you get out of *The Polar Express* will be a reflection of what you want to get out of it. Children, especially younger ones, will love it. You, on the other hand, will have to let your guards down, and try to believe again. If you're not capable of, or perhaps not interested in, doing that, then I guess it's bah humbug for you. I hope not. Maybe this is more than a tad early, but I wish you a Merry Christmas, and I definitely recommend taking your family to *The Polar Express*.

Comments? E-mail Weindl at joweindl@yahoo.com.



By JOE WEINDL
Special to the
Saipan Tribune

wallace

Fox to create series for wireless phones

NEW YORK (AP)—The Twentieth Century Fox studio, a veteran of the big screen and the TV screen, is about to break into an entirely new realm: the really little screen, the kind that comes on a cell phone.

In what appeared to be the first arrangement of its kind, Twentieth Century Fox said Wednesday it would create a unique series of one-minute dramas based on its hit show "24" exclusively for a new high-speed wireless service being offered by Vodafone PLC, the world's biggest cell phone company.

Vodafone will begin offering the one-minute episodes in January in the United Kingdom,

coinciding with the start of the fourth season of the show on a satellite TV service.

The "mobisodes," as they're being called, will be introduced later in 2005 in up to 23 more countries where Vodafone operates, mainly in Europe, as well as in the United States through the company's Verizon Wireless joint venture.

The deal is part of a broader agreement between Fox Entertainment Group and London-based Vodafone under which Fox, the entertainment unit of Rupert Murdoch's News Corp., will develop other programming to be viewed on the phones.

In March, the new Vodafone service, to be called Vodafone

live! with 3G, will also offer trailers and clips of movies under a "Movie of the Month" service, the first one being "Bridget Jones: The Edge of Reason."

Cell phone operators have invested heavily to roll out high-speed wireless services, intent on driving new revenues from Internet browsing, streaming video and audio, and other forms of media.

The announcement came on the same day that Vodafone announced the launch of its long-delayed high-speed wireless services across much of Europe. The launch ended a wait of several years since Vodafone spent billions to acquire licenses to use more of the public airwaves

to deliver the new services, which are known as "3G" in the wireless industry.

The one-minute dramas and movie trailers from Fox were one of several services being unveiled for Vodafone's service, which will also offer news, sports, music and games.

The cellular version of the "24" series will be based on characters from the television show. Twenty four of them will be shown in all.

Teri Everett, a spokeswoman for Fox Entertainment Group, said Fox's deal with Vodafone represented the first time a Hollywood studio had agreed to make a TV series expressly for distribution on cell phones.

Bodyguard says Minnelli made him have sex

NEW YORK (AP)—Liza Minnelli's bodyguard claims the Oscar-winning actress made him have sex with her in order to keep his job, according to recently unsealed court documents.

The allegations are detailed in M'Hammed Soumayah's \$100 million lawsuit against the entertainer. Minnelli's lawyers did not return calls for comment Wednesday. But in a court document, one of her lawyers, Dorothy Weber, said Soumayah had "commenced this action in a quick sand of untruths and misstatements" and accused him of a "shakedown" of her client.

In the lawsuit, Soumayah, 56, accused Minnelli of assault and battery, breach of contract, with-

holding payment for services rendered and sexual harrasment.

Although the suit was filed Sept. 30 in Manhattan's state Supreme Court and sealed by Justice Barbara Kapnick, she unsealed it late Tuesday over the objections of Minnelli's lawyers.

Meanwhile, Minnelli sued Soumayah for \$250,000 on Tuesday, alleging breach of contract and breach of fiduciary duty. The two-page filing contained no details.

Minnelli's estranged husband, David Gest, has also accused Minnelli of assault in a \$10 million lawsuit against her. Minnelli is suing Gest for allegedly stealing \$2 million from her, and both are suing each other for divorce.



Liza Minnelli attends the launch party for "Growing Up Gotti", held Gotham Hall in this July 27, 2004 file photo in New York City.

AP

Burt Reynolds' ex-girlfriend alleges abuse

LOS ANGELES (AP)—A former girlfriend of Burt Reynolds has sued the "Cannonball Run" actor for abuse and broken promises—just one day after he sued her on grounds that she was threatening to falsely accuse him.

In the lawsuit filed Tuesday in Los Angeles Superior Court, Pamela Seals said Reynolds agreed to maintain her lifestyle and take care of her mother indefinitely, even if the relationship ended. She also said he

promised to give her half of his estate in Jupiter, Fla.

When they broke up this year, Seals said, Reynolds failed to follow through on his promises. She also accused him in the lawsuit of beating and choking her and stomping on her toes—abuse she said lasted from 1998 to 2000.

In Reynolds' lawsuit, filed in Florida on Monday, he said she threatened to accuse him of those acts unless he paid her millions of dollars.

Reynolds' lawyer, Bob Montgomery, called Seals' threats blackmail, saying the actor offered to settle the matter for \$1 million but Seals refused. He said because Reynolds and Seals were never married, she is entitled to nothing under Florida law.

"She wanted more and more and her demands were absolutely exorbitant," Montgomery said.

Seals' lawyer, Mark Maynor, said Reynolds made no \$1 million offer. He said Reynolds physical-

ly and emotionally abused Seals during a 16-year relationship and that she had asked only for what Reynolds promised.

In 1996, after a messy divorce from actress Loni Anderson, Reynolds filed for bankruptcy protection, with debts totaling \$10 million. Montgomery said the actor has since recovered financially.

Reynolds' films include "Smokey and the Bandit," "Deliverance," "The Longest Yard" and "Boogie Nights."

Timberlake, Diaz defend paparazzi fracas

LOS ANGELES (AP)—"Charlie's Angels" star Cameron Diaz and her pop star boyfriend Justin Timberlake snatched away a photographer's camera when he and a partner surprised them outside a ritzy hotel.

Representatives for the stars said the couple was "ambushed by two men, who jumped out of a concealed hiding place on a dark, deserted street late at night."

"Any actions by Diaz and Timberlake were merely taken in self-defense, as a reaction to the unprovoked and assaultive conduct of the two men," said a statement from Diaz spokesman Brad Cafarelli and Timberlake spokesman Ken Sunshine.

After a brief fracas with the photographer outside the famed Chateau Marmont on Saturday, Diaz broke free and left the scene with the camera.

The publicists said she took it in the hopes that it could be used to identify the men to authorities. They said she turned the camera over to police, who are investigating the matter.

Los Angeles police Officer Sarah Faden said the department also received a complaint from one of the photographers, whose name she said she did not have, accusing the couple of battery and grand theft.

Courtney Love pleads not guilty in assault case

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Courtney Love pleaded not guilty Wednesday to a felony charge of assault with a deadly weapon stemming from a confrontation with a woman

at her ex-boyfriend's house.

Love, 40, entered her plea before Superior Court Judge Terry Green. She is scheduled to return to court for a Dec. 15 pretrial hearing, said

Jane Robison, a spokeswoman for the district attorney's office. A trial likely would not start until next year, she said.

The felony charge is related to an April 25 incident at the home of Love's former boyfriend. Love allegedly found a 32-year-old woman sleeping on a sofa and threw a liquor bottle at her and chased her with a flashlight.

Love has remained free on \$150,000 bail. She also faces an accompanying charge of committing a crime while out on bail for an unrelated drug case. If convicted, she could get anywhere from probation to six years in jail.

Love's attorney, Howard Weitzman, said Wednesday that he believes the case has been "grossly overcharged" and hopes that prosecutors might offer a plea bargain.

The assault case is one of several legal problems involving Love, the former lead singer for the group Hole and the widow of Nirvana singer Kurt Cobain.

She pleaded guilty last month in New York City to disorderly conduct for striking a club-goer on the head with a microphone during a concert.

Love also pleaded guilty earlier this year to a misdemeanor drug charge and agreed to enter drug rehabilitation.

The singer also faces two felony drug charges in Beverly Hills Superior Court for alleged illegal possession of painkillers.



Singer-actress Courtney Love reacts during her arraignment at a Los Angeles County Court, Wednesday, Nov. 10, 2004.

AP

Boss's advice proved to be worse than his dog's bite

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN

DEAR ABBY: Last summer I was attacked by my boss's dog at work, leaving a nasty scar on my nose. My boss, claiming to be a "healing expert," advised me to avoid a trip to the doctor (as they don't put stitches in one's nose, he said) and to instead let him apply "healing oils" to my face. He said the scar would be gone within a month. I naively heeded his advice.



Dear Abby

During my remaining time at work, his wife (also my boss and the true owner of the dog) looked after me caringly, always wishing me well on my healing, swearing genuinely by her husband's talents as a healer.

Three months and nine days later, the scar is still there, and on a recent trip to the doctor he informed me that I should have gotten stitches. I now face expensive plastic surgery or dermatological work if I want to be rid of the scar.

I am debating whether I should take legal action. I'd feel guilty because the wife would be the brunt of any lawsuit when, I believe, she sincerely had faith in her husband, but I can't help but feel he cheated me. What should I do?

DOWNTRODDEN AND DOG-BITTEN

DEAR D&D: It should be as plain as the scar on your nose to your employers that the husband's "healing powers" failed in your case. Put them on notice that you will be getting a referral to a board-certified plastic surgeon or dermatologist to repair the damage to your face, and that you expect them or their insurance provider to pay the bill. If they give you an argument, consult a lawyer. Do not feel guilty. You are the victim. How the "healer" handles this letter will reveal whether he's truly a healer, or just a heel.

□ □ □ □

DEAR ABBY: Two months before our wedding, my fiancé, "Frank," and I called it off. We broke up completely for a while, hoping to resolve some problems before tying the knot. At the time, I had a maid of honor and five bridesmaids, all dearest, closest friends.

Since then we have all graduated, and now, a year after our original wedding date, Frank and I are engaged again.

A few of the girls who were supposed to be in the wedding party have drifted away, and as I plan my upcoming wedding, I'm wondering if I must re-invite every member of the original wedding party. I would prefer a smaller number of attendants, to make it a more special group. However, I'm afraid that if I do that, I'll irrevocably damage my friendship with some of these girls. I'd appreciate your advice.

PARTY-PRUNING BRIDE IN OHIO

DEAR PARTY-PRUNER: As long as you explain to your girlfriends that you are scaling down the wedding in favor of something smaller and more simple, they should understand and not be offended. Some of them may even be relieved to be off the hook for the dresses, shoes and other expenses that go along with the "honor."

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Write Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

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Pastimes





TRIBUNE SPORTS SCORES

SPORTS TRANSACTIONS

MLB
HOUSTON ASTROS-Fired Jimmy Williams, manager; Burt Hooton, pitching coach; and Harry Spilman, hitting coach. Named Phil Garner manager, Jim Hickey pitching coach, and Gary Gaetti hitting coach.

NBA
ATLANTA HAWKS-Signed C Jason Collier.
BOSTON CELTICS-Re-signed C Mark Blount to a six-year contract.
CHARLOTTE BOBCATS-Signed G Jason Hart and F Tamar Slay.
DALLAS MAVERICKS-Re-signed G Marquis Daniels to a five-year contract with a team option.
DETROIT PISTONS-Signed F Antonio McDyess to a four-year contract with a team option and G-F Carlos Delfino to a three-year contract with a team option.
GOLDEN STATE WARRIORS-Re-signed C Adonal Foyle to a six-year contract.
LOS ANGELES CLIPPERS-Traded F-C Melvin Ely and G Eddie House to Charlotte for 2005 and 2006 second-round draft picks.
LOS ANGELES LAKERS-Traded C Shaquille O'Neal to Miami for F Lamar Odom, F Caron Butler, F-C Brian Grant and a future first-round draft pick.
MEMPHIS GRIZZLIES-Signed F Brian Cardinal to a six-year contract.
MILWAUKEE BUCKS-Signed C Etan Thomas to a six-year offer sheet.
PHILADELPHIA 76ERS-Signed F Brian Skinner to a multiyear contract.
PHOENIX SUNS-Signed G Quentin Richardson to a six-year offer sheet. Signed G Steve Nash to a six-yr contract.
SAN ANTONIO SPURS-Re-signed F Bruce Bowen. Signed G Beno Udrih.
TORONTO RAPTORS-Signed G Rafer Alston to a five-year contract.
UTAH JAZZ-Signed F Carlos Boozer and C Mehmet Okur to six-year offer sheets. Re-signed G Carlos Arroyo to a four-year contract.

NFL
GREEN BAY PACKERS-Voided the trade of DE Jamal Reynolds to Indianapolis after Reynolds failed his physical and waived him.
NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS-Released S Jason Perry.

PHILADELPHIA EAGLES-Signed G Adrien Clarke to a four-year contract and LB Jeremiah Trotter to a one-year contract.

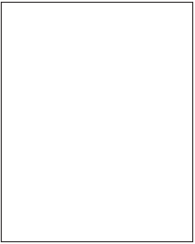
Olympics
U.S. OLYMPIC MEN'S ROAD CYCLING TEAM-Announced Levi Leipheimer will replace Lance Armstrong.

College
AUBURN-Named Casey Dunn assistant baseball coach.
DARTMOUTH-Named Maribel Sanchez Souther women's cross country coach.
EVERGREEN STATE-Named Kim Farnsworth athletic trainer.
HOUSTON-Named John Severance women's tennis coach.
N.J. CITY-Named Bridgette Quimpo softball coach.
NORTH DAKOTA STATE-Named Eric Viney women's assistant volleyball coach.
NORTHWESTERN-Announced men's junior basketball F Bernard Cote will transfer from Kentucky.
OKLAHOMA-Named Bill Pink director of women's basketball operations.
PALM BEACH ATLANTIC-Announced the resignation of Chris Bizol, men's and women's tennis coach, to take a position with Texas-Tyler.
RHODE ISLAND-Announced the resignation of Boe Pearman, women's basketball coach.
SANTA CLARA-Named M. Felipe Montoro assistant cross country coach and Steve Drake women's assistant basketball coach.
SETON HALL-Named Gerson Echeverry men's assistant soccer coach.
SKIDMORE-Named Darren Bennett women's basketball coach.
ST. FRANCIS, PA.-Named Wylie Crisanti women's lacrosse coach.
TULSA-Named Christy Connoyer softball coach.
WRIGHT STATE-Named Rob Cooper baseball coach.

By The Associated Press

LOCAL SCORES

RESTAURANT LEAGUE STANDINGS		
Angel Wings	3	0
Country House	3	1
Jollibee	3	1
Capricciosa	2	1
Keeraku	1	2
LSG Sky Chefs	0	3
El Segundo	0	4



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Sports

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